Boston Public Library
3 9999 10589 237 4

No. AP2.H794
v. 4
1930-1931

THE TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY
LUX
OMNIUM CIVIUM
OF THE CITY OF BOSTON
1852 . 1878

10/31

68

THE *Fall* 1930

Hound & Horn

Rec'd
OCT 10 1930
B. P. L.

PISANELLO, Part I, *an essay by* Adrian Stokes

GATES OF THE COMPASS *a poem by* Robert Hillyer

HENRY ADAMS, Part III *by* Louis Zukofsky

NEW YORK CITY, *4 photographs by* Walker Evans

SOME PROBLEMS OF MUSICAL CRITICISM *by* Herbert Schwartz

STORIES *by* Erskine Caldwell *and* Kay Boyle

MEYERHOLD'S THEATRE *by* Louis Lozowick

CHRONICLES - CORRESPONDENCE - BOOK REVIEWS

3187

Fifty Cents

THE VIKING PRESS

has the honor to announce the first two titles in an important new series:

THE KING'S PRINTERS' EDITIONS

The Masque of Queenes
BY BEN JONSON. With a facsimile of the manuscript in the poet's hand, a fine example of 17th century calligraphy, and 20 collotype reproductions of the sketches by Inigo Jones. The text is set in the new 16 point Arrighi italic designed by Frederick Warde from the original of Arrighi da Vicenza (c. 1526). Foolscap folio.
Limited to 150 copies for America.

The Poems and Verses of
JOHN KEATS. Arranged in chronological order by John Middleton Murry. With three engravings on wood by Edward Carrick. Two volumes, foolscap quarto. Limited to 350 copies for America.

SEND FOR ILLUSTRATED PROSPECTUS

OTHER NEW VIKING PRESS PUBLICATIONS

CARL VAN DOREN

Swift

A BIOGRAPHY

"JONATHAN SWIFT is the Moby Dick among men of letters," says Carl Van Doren, and it only needs to be added that Van Doren is his Melville in this brilliant biography. Its one aim is to set Swift in the light of that same terrible truth which he poured upon the world.

Illustrated. $3.00

ROBERT HILLYER

The Gates of the Compass

ROBERT HILLYER'S first long poem in several years, and perhaps his greatest work, of which a part appears in this *Hound & Horn*, is the title poem of his new book, which includes the Phi Beta Kappa Ode delivered at Harvard in 1929, the modern ballad *Manorbier*, and other lyrics. $2.00

The Viking Press, 18 *East* 48*th Street*, *New York*

THE HOUND & HORN is published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, by THE HOUND & HORN, INCORPORATED. Publication Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Executive and Editorial Office, 10 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Single copies, 50 cents; subscriptions, one year $2.00, two years $3.50; Canadian subscriptions, one year $2.25; two years $4.00; foreign subscriptions, one year $2.50, two years $4.50. Application pending for transfer of entry as second class matter from the post office at Portland, Maine to the post office at Concord, New Hampshire, under the act of March 3, 1879.

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. IV, No. 1

October-December, 1930

PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

*AP2
.H794 v.4
*~~7245.62, v.4~~ 1930-31

CONTENTS

Pisanello, Part I, an essay by *Adrian Stokes* 5

The Gates of the Compass, a poem by *Robert Hillyer* 26
Part I, Memory

Episode in the Life of an Ancestor, a story by *Kay Boyle* 33

New York City, four photographs by *Walker Evans*

A Monument Among the Winds, a poem by *R. P. Blackmur* 43

Henry Adams, Part III by *Louis Zukofsky* 46
A criticism in autobiography

Two Poems by *Kathleen Tankersley Young* 73

The Automobile That Wouldn't Run, a story by *Erskine Caldwell* 75

Song in Quiet Weather, a poem by *Paul Horgan* 82

Some Problems of Musical Criticism, an essay by *Herbert Schwartz* 84

Feb 10 1932

CONTENTS

Chronicles

Theatre, On Meyerhold with photographs *Louis Lozowick* 95
Music, on Aaron Copland *Theodore Chanler* 106
Art, on Museums *A. Hyatt Mayor* 111

Correspondence

Letter from *Ezra Pound* 113
Letter from *Allan Tate* 117

Book Reviews

"Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.," by G. F. Lahey 118
"The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.," ed. by Robert Bridges *Hester Pickman* 118
"Anabasis," by St.-J. Perse *Lewis Galantiere* 128
"Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim," by Charles Moore *John Wheelwright* 138
"Introduction à l'Étude de St. Augustine," by Étienne Gilson *Richard McKeon* 143
"Circumference," ed. by Genevieve Taggard 149
"Olive, Cypress and Palm," ed. by Mina Curtiss *Dudley Fitts* 149
"Portrait of a Diplomatist," by Harold Nicolson *Raymond Mortimer* 155

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Adrian Stokes is an English critic who has spent considerable time in Italy. Another section of his study on the Renaissance, "Agostino di Duccio" appeared a year ago in the *Criterion*.

Robert Hillyer is the author of seven volumes of verse and teaches at Harvard. His long poem, *Gates of the Compass*, will be published late in the fall by the Viking Press.

Kay Boyle's first book of short stories was published in Paris by the Black Sun Press. A second will be published this fall by Cape and Smith, Inc.

Kathleen Tankersley Young will issue her first volume of poems this fall.

Erskine Caldwell has appeared in the *American Caravans*. His first book of collected short stories will appear this winter.

Captain Paul Horgan teaches English at a Military School in the Southwest.

Raymond Mortimer contributed a monthly London letter to the *Dial*.

Lewis Galantière is well known for his translations from the French.

Walker Evans is a Brooklyn photographer who recently illustrated Hart Crane's poems "The Bridge," published by the Black Sun Press.

Louis Lozowick is primarily a painter and lithographer of industrial mechanics. His work appears frequently in *The New Masses*.

Copyright, 1930, by The Hound & Horn, Incorporated

THE HOUND & HORN is published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, by The Hound & Horn, Incorporated. Bernard Bandler II and Lincoln E. Kirstein, Editors. Alan M. Stroock, Business Manager. Publication Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Executive and Editorial Office, 10 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped return envelope. Payment will be made on publication.

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. IV, No. 1 October-December, 1930

PISANELLO

First of Four Essays on the Tempio Malatestiano at Rimini[1]

FOR this job music must be banished from the ears of the reader. No rhythm will interpret the encasement of San Francesco. The air is breathless. Sound cannot suffer such constriction. Music is a blandishment. Upon the hills voices other than the chatter in the dining-room, and life is known cleft in twain. A sense of unreality darkens the day and sours the night. Each effect, each care, they are not real, and the wind comes up, blows the rudderless beam of life dropping as she is driven the ballast of preoccupation. And so, sound raps out stealthily. Lines upon the forehead are smoothed by the pressure of meticulous concatenation. Music gives familiar objects something to float on. Rhetoric was the music of the fifteenth century. But Pio II with his talk demonstrated his ignorance of the true binding fibre. These joints are not serried. For music is the flood-escape of the soul, ripplets that engross the wayward breeze. Upon this flood the soul may trespass in the storm. Like the gifts handed out to children at a juncture of the party, so, when a band strikes up, a strong if tremulous voice is presented to each desire and mood; eyes, too, not to see but to weep with and to sparkle. But away with music, banish sense of rhythm. There have been bigger, firmer, brighter chains for the polyglot, life. We too must have them. First, banish the stop-gap, music. Italy at her best could have done without it. Should this not be her greatest boast? Here it has not always been necessary to raise the watery obelisk nor to jog the streets.

---

[1] Part of a work in progress on the Italian Renaissance.

Take some virgin land, not barren, you must see, but under the presidency of blue sky, virgin in beauty but devised into terraces habitable with olives, take some wind, breeze that does not peer into chinks, take the evening star, a sea without a tide, a hurried dawn, take more blue sky, soft and blue, take them and thrust them into a man. It will be a tight fit. But a perfect fit, so perfect that music will not bubble up from subterranean cracks. In that man the passions will be constrained to run within an orbit as lucent and rounded as the blue sky, the intellect will fix upon the morning star above the sister terraces, green upon stone. His body anointed by the dawn, contested by the sea, will offer smooth and firm surface to the changing light of dusk. So tight this fit that the man will be mobilized, his every faculty on the leash of sunlight. The very sun puts a constriction upon him to manifest himself. He is clamped down to this by the sun and the rounded sky. Even the movement of the hillside and the freedom of the air is bound by clamp to manifestation, and on this pile hues and shadows take the softness of their ease. When the soul of that man moves, without abyss and solitary, not sharp nor pricked by weariness and fear, but passionate, lit, moulded, rounded, formed into coagulated mass; when the soul of that man moves, it turns broad upon itself like the solid wheel of Boadicea's chariot, stone from the jagged mountain, hammered to stable shape and concentrated strength.

Show me unvarnished Nature they have said, the real thing, the buffeting sea, ice, endless expanse, the unforgiving greys of England, the miasmatic glare of the Orient, show me Greenland, Brazil, the Atlantic and the Siberian steppes? You are wrong. Man gives himself over to, but cannot take to himself, enormities. For he responds to this Nature with his own profundity, intellectual and passionate. In every region he creates in art and in life with the material of his circumstance. But elsewhere all art, and life too, however great because profound, has the quality of music, must seem musical in contrast to the Quattro Cento. For no one can digest the sea, not even the oldest salt, no one the expanse of pampas, nor lonely runnels. Existence overweighs meaning, which after all is not so profound, as existence is but a meaning like everything else, and like everything else must indicate balancing contrasts. At best, the soul sends forth its intermittent juice, its incomparable flood of music touching and comprehending enormity for a period, music that dies down and drips long and low beneath consciousness, music of the arts and of rational structure, music of pulsating lives, of invasion, and of the shifting ardours of society, music of deep-welling religion. And if the Italian climate is soft, no more exacting colour, no grander lines have been brought in entirety within the man, nor given out with equal success in painting. This encasement of Nature is hard enough for the tender spirit, such comparative softness is just supportable as clothing for the delicate nakedness of the soul, hardens that nakedness so as to be plastic. The fierceness of a young body may be all the more apparent for an encasement of gleaming mail, so Humanism brought within one circle of affirmation the rough to enhance the smooth and the smooth to enhance the rough. No such solidity if something be left over in the landscape or where the needs of the body are sacrificed to the "inner life." Externalization is the mode of existence, the activity of soul in the body and the mind. Freedom is when all can be taken in, and all given out created, so living progresses neither within nor without, just as among the pacific yet exuberant olive grove; by no path will one come upon stone gateways sharp with pink stucco, heavy with ivy, habituated to the idyll like statues in a wood, Nature humanized yet natural, outdoors approximating to indoors while houses make answering assurance, exterior staircases, flat roofs from which one steps to the higher terrace, loggias, suspended balconies, indoors approximating to outdoors, with the neutral shade beneath pergola and between the undergrowth, doubly restful.

After all every artist, every thinker even, accomplishes his tricks to hold something tight and together, a universe without exhaustion, without escape at the corners. They conjure with a style or prevailing quality which coagulates, where possible an omnipresent plastic, forms, a Form which like the coloured handkerchief that encloses and distributes into the round a workman's scrappy lunch, enables a collocation. The white-throat, the quick-moving exclamatory poet seeks a stable for his fancy with the liquid words slow for instantaneous feeling. Following on the Italian Renaissance, methodical investigation has woven coils and even spun webs where more fibrous material has been lacking, stuff to contain things. But the authentic Humanism, rarest manifestation of the fifteenth century, created the perfect involucrum, not structure the knowledge of which entailed a difficult apperception, but Form conceded to all the faculties, an architectonic embraced by the senses as well as by the mind. The condition of men was in happy measure with their scope. Before the Humanist — and by that term, as will become plain, we refer not to the professional spokesmen but to Sigismondo — burnished his solid world with his mind, before he provided body and mind with continuous conviction by art, he had known the likeness of his bundle in the bowl of the blue sky, in the accountable waters of the Mediterranean: and this soft Nature that rears like a horse painted by Chirico, exhibiting a flourish that induced the Romans to organize the mounting terraces, to originate the villa, villas tall on climbing planes, led them on to sky-scraper effects, to arch upon arch and columnar structure picked out by distinct and toga-ed statuary — this he had taken to himself, had incorporated, clamped upon his being. As the flame of a candle beneath the palm of his hand will burn an individual who before was gazing in lethargy at a furnace, so, if the elements of the Italian day and night are soft in comparison with the more usual monstrosities, yet the austerity of Nature, however mitigated, may seem more vital than in outlandish regions if she be brought near enough; indeed, the greater vigour is required of the soul that would articulate without magic by means of the elements, vigour to use elemental asperity, to transmute their harshness, as does the blue day, into strength of clear discernment. During the fifteenth century we judge that passions ran wild, while loose motives and chaotic guile discourage the upright historian. A Sforza, a Cosimo, an Alphonso, a Foscari, a Niccolo D'Este, a Piccinino, a Pio II, a Federico, Sigismondo, what were they up to at any particular moment? But over all this coming and going, upon Gothic San Francesco is clamped Alberti's encasement, Sigismondo's white wall decorated at its girth with a frieze of his emblems, the elephant of Fame, the chequered shield of his coat of arms, the $ monogram symbol of his love for Isotta, each well garlanded and joined by his other emblem, the eglantine rose. Templum aedificavit. The whole is his emblem, he the archetype of Humanism. For a compulsion lies upon Sigismondo, a constraint to manifest himself, like the compulsion that weighs on the sunlight to kindle and to colour. He the archetype of Humanism because, his passions savage, more than others he was compelled to objectify his energy, the Nature inside him, lust not to be spilt away like music though he should wish it. Like the blue sky again, the Quattro Cento constriction, Humanism, forced men to manifest their colour, throughout display of extreme emotion to embody the soul, nailed down yet free, clear as the midday light. Sigismondo personifies, his building proclaims a constriction upon energy, energies not thus held in, but on the contrary, a constriction that necessitates their simultaneous expansion so as to spread like the sudden fan of the peacock's tail, or like the wide-thrown shells auricular, naked to the trumpets of the putti, broad shells that are the favourite architectural device of the Renaissance. In the façade and flanking arches, the encasement of San Francesco, in Sigismondo's life, there is nothing that suggests music, no vigour unfolded like a theme, in spite of the reiteration of arch and war, stone-blossom and love, no pervading melody. The Tempio is sudden like a glimpse, firm like a flower in full bloom. Yet, though movement be lacking, there supervenes on contemplation of this building, no sense of exhaustion. Energy is pent-up here, not spilt, pent-up to instant manifestation of all of it all at once, constricted then, because energy usually emerges like a melody, gains momentum, showers on a captured world, like a lava-stream overlapping rocks and villages. Any architecture that is even vaguely Quattro Cento in spirit, the Tempio foremost, gives the lie to Pater's dictum about all art approximating to the condition of music. Music, so watery, flows, that is to say, moves in the path of Time, perhaps in front, perhaps behind, perhaps accompanying. But the Tempio is instantaneous, simultaneous, opposite to the piled-up architectonic of melody and rhythm, the shattered flood of Time, the gathering cascade. Yet it is not a bold stroke, a brilliant, unsupported flash which once only will intrigue and startle. The devotee is not intrigued nor startled, but arrested as by the wide face of a rose. Never has the feeling for mass been so urgent, mass all at once like mountains in unbroken sunlight.

The memorable meeting at Belfiore now stamps itself upon the page. Brought together at the suggestion of the Duke of Milan and through the agency of Borso D'Este to whom the palace at Belfiore belonged, brought together so that Italian politics might be simplified, Sigismondo confronts Federico, arch-enemies, lords of adjoining territories. They were bound to be rivals, it is their very profound enmity, so just, that compels each to exaggerate his personality in order to meet the opposition of the other, an opposition dramatically symbolical of one in the European character. Federico possessed a grave and rather morbid nobility. He was talented and responsible, a courageous soldier. Federico's character was protected by matters of self-discipline and carefulness. His fright — and to him, lord of the neighbouring upland state of Montefeltro, Sigismondo must have been most sinister — his fright at the tension holding an unaccountable figure in Rimini beneath the mountains, tensity of cleverness as well as of passion, of actuality as well as of scheme, his fright — but Federico was a sober man, and terror of Sigismondo unhackneyed honourable conduct. Except for being a soldier of fortune by profession, an emotional profession for a grave man, Federico would hardly have developed into so remarkable a figure. As it is, the above-board soldier of fortune builds the first country mansion, that is to say, the first house for spider-men, men and women with time, position and security upon their hands, who spin so that the web of it may hold both themselves and their posterity under the roof, forever spinning the thread to brocade the chairs, thereafter sitting to spin again to cover weakness, to bind strength to the house; and it is a dull fire that the long panes of mansions reflect, caught as they are by the last sun.

Sigismondo couldn't spin. He didn't build a palace, much less a mansion. Apprehensiveness wasn't in the blood. His fears were shorter, practical, less disarming. He built for his home the latest kind of fortress. Sigismondo believed in his urgent health, so that the diffuse gravity of Federico gaining reliance with the powers of Italy, adding weight to his continual charges against Sigismondo — as early as 1445, only a few months after Federico had become lord of Urbino, Sigismondo complained of these calumnies in a letter by which he challenged his injurer to a duel — this diffuse gravity augmented Sigismondo's rage, pent-up, as his name is by hard consonants.

For Sigismondo was a serious character, conscious of unusual vitality. He stabilized his spirit by building the Tempio, an emblem more complete than any other yet created by man, lived hard enough to impregnate these emblems. A more serious character than grave Federico, than Pio II, spiritually moved at the contemplation of his own canny and industrious worldliness. Ceaselessly impelled, Sigismondo was in no sense a profligate. Violent his life but not extravagant; yet the genuine humanity between the tides was deep. His libertinage was sometimes terrible, because serious. He did not contemplate insurance policies taken out with God and man. He need not justify his actions because believing that he could transfuse anything into his blue day. Respected in Italy for his skill in war, his noble birth and Humanism, Sigismondo championed the interests of Pope Eugenius, the Florentine state owed him everything, the Venetians employed him time and time again. But he made good enemies. The spider-men knew at once their natural foe. Alphonso, king of Naples, frustrated in his attempt, one that had had prospect of success, to conquer Italy, frustrated by the irresponsibility, as he thought, and by the military genius of Sigismondo, became vindictive. Sigismondo got him on the quick, Pio also for whom the humbling of Sigismondo was necessary to his soul. For these vendettas — they caused his downfall — Sigismondo stimulated resentments quite out of proportion to their apparent causes. The personality behind his behaviour amounted to a most penetrating reproach against any personage settling into a house: and, after the peace of Lodi all Italy was settling in. Sforza had achieved Milan, Cosimo was firm in Florence, Venice had moderated her territorial ambition, Eugenius IV and Innocent V had made Rome more habitable for the Popes, Alphonso had finally settled in as the respectable monarch of Naples. Sigismondo wanted peace to build the Tempio. But he had no money to pay off old counts, he wanted more money. So Piccinino, heir of the Bracchesi bands over whom Sforza had triumphed, homeless, without booty from the long wars though the family rôle had been only less important than that of the Sforza, Giacomo Piccinino to whom some justice was due, whose eventual employment must be decided, was set on Sigismondo to get what he could. And of the meeting at Belfiore? Only this:

> "And Borso had the pair of them up to Bel Fiore
> The pair of them, Sigismondo and Federico Urbino,
> Or perhaps in the palace, Ferrara, Sigismund upstairs
> And Urbino's gang in the basement,
> And a regiment of guards in, to keep order,
> For all the good that did:
> 'Te cavero la budella del corpo!'
> El conte levatosi:
> 'Io te cavero la corata a te!'"[2]

Once again, banish sounds; the quickest of them will drag. There are ghosts at Rimini, ghouls of the midday sun; these, not as you might think, accessories to the visitation of nocturnal railway noise that depresses comers to this town. The agony endures with the beauty in the light, the stress for Sigismondo to make ends meet subject to the rough usages of Nature on this wild shore, the alarm of creation out of passionate effrontery, these the calm stones, perfection of mass instantaneous to the eye, many of them uprooted from the graveyard, their funereal inscriptions still visible in the sun, these constrained to beauty, to serve the living by the heated will for which there is no peace; death defied in favour of his love Isotta, so that the Tempio springs anew and anew in the meridian glare. Fate wrestles in vain for Sigismondo's soul.

This ultimate restlessness is hardly sinister. For tragedy has befallen; and there can be no shadow, not cast by death nor tragedy, no bitterness, no fading to a memory. Insistent, bright as always the equivocal emblems!

---

[2] From Ezra Pound's Tenth Canto. A draft of XVI Cantos for the beginning of a poem of some length. Three Mountains Press, Paris, 1925.

Benzi, creature of Pope Pio II, asserted in the "invettiva" against Sigismondo which he compounded at the papal bidding (though it was rumoured that Pio himself was the author of this emotive oratory), asserted that Sigismondo's ambition was such that he held it to the dishonour of the Deity that he, Sigismondo, had not been entrusted with the jurisdiction of Italy, of the world, of the universe, because he would have known how to give enduring happiness to men, would have rendered the soul immortal, the soul which at present he considered to perish with the body: whence his lust for power; whence his motto, if Right is violated by me, then it is for reasons of State. No doubt Sigismondo did talk like this at times, shocking the priests or heavily answering their vexatious charges about some incident abstracted from the complicated fury of its occasion, his past served up to him dead at their touch . . . just as he probably told Cosimo di Medici in Florence when Pio also lodged there, that clericals ought to be forbidden civil power, just as he may have said — Benzi further records — that God didn't exist, and if he were to do so, would pay no attention to human affairs. But there is no evidence to show that Sigismondo ruled foully. If he wanted power, it was first employment as a professional soldier that he wanted, money to build the Tempio. And this, owing to a very complicated web of misfortune, he could not get after the Sienese campaign of 1455. How he came to be persecuted by the church (there is no other word for it: Pio obtained support from Sforza, self-made Duke of Milan, for this Malatesta crusade, only when he, Pio, revealed his nepotistic design on Sigismondo's lands, promising Sforza a share); how he was victimized by Federico who had rushed off to Naples for conference with Alphonso directly after the Belfiore incident; how he was martyr to the snobbery of Sforza, the peasant's son, re the house of Aragon at Naples, martyr to Pio's snobbish sympathy with Sforza, the latter reverenced by the former as the embodiment of success and dignified worldliness (alone trustworthy) — thus he had been reverenced while still a soldier of fortune by the plain cleric gnawing his fingers in his hungry days, and now the two moderns, the knowing ones were to control Italy and the peace that perpetuated their success, so Pio thinks — the butt of Piccinino who behaved like a spoilt child, who fastened upon Assisi on Pope Callixtus' death, who was altogether intractable, who was after a lordship in Italy as became obvious when he refused the honourable command of Pio's Turkish crusade; how Sigismondo, his land held, or supposed to be held in trust by treaty till he had paid indemnity to Aragon, yet Piccinino not called off; how Sigismondo struck out, annihilated the papal men, incited the Angevins to the invasion of Naples, the French who Sforza at Milan feared; how Piccinino joined the Angevins, how nearly their cause was victorious; how Pio with some courage then sacrificed all his other ideals to exterminate Sigismondo, the character behind the actions more hated than the Turk and the lands wanted for his nephew, two birds with one stone; how Pio moved up the cowardly cannon of the church feeling himself to be the impersonation of hierarchic volubility which was challenged, invented propaganda, calumny believed to this day by posterity; how that rhetoric failed until supported by promises of the spoil; how Sigismondo spun round, wound-up by the long agony, perhaps even sought the aid of the above-mentioned Turk; how the Venetians poured enough oil on the waters so that Pio never got Rimini for his nephew, only the rest of the land: this must be read in Soranzo's book,[3] Giovanni Soranzo the Venetian, the first man to investigate the facts.

Sigismondo, as ever, paid for Sforza's success, paid for these adventurers settling into their lukish-warm houses, who left at large remainders of the true Quattro Cento, Piccinino and his unemployed Bracchese bands, Sigismondo, and perforce Federico — as long as Sigismondo lived. Terrible the tragedy, the harassment, this bullying of a stronger type by expansive and reserved intelligence, by the Pios, the Federicos who underlie the fabric of our Europe: this titillating of a wound-up spring, this meaner *savoir vivre* making healthiness prudential, this stateliness and dignity, best fruit of the long mansions, they triumph for their infinite reduplication.[4]

Sigismondo forced irresolute, Sigismondo at bay, interminably, — no wonder if the airs shift low-lying, expectant at Rimini, restless the beaten sands. Death is yet to-day defied in favour of Isotta, exultant still Sigismondo shamed by the shabby worshippers in the Tempio and the waning season, crumbled the old colour. For Sigismondo was not allowed bitterness. Nothing that mitigated was allowed him. Acidity dissolves, gnaws at the heart. Original fervour of the delicate soul dries up, and thought comes pale, heavy with jagged tooth. Bitterness is an abatement of the storm that leaves behind wracks of pinched thunder, toneless, hollow. But no anguish might flatten Sigismondo; on the contrary, each blow, tragic because no further retaliation is possible, must increase the unsnappable tension. His terrible energy will be redoubled, his rage furnished with larger bellows so that he dies a young man at fifty-one, exploded. Before this, unworn by the obstinate rectitude with which Federico confronted his bad dream of the monster at Rimini, unswamped by the triumphant rivers of Pio's rhetoric, sailed to Greece for the Venetians against the Turk, having returned empty-handed and without the slightest hope of regaining his dominions, when he must agitate himself even in defence of Rimini, without a future, forbidden a past, without scope for activity in the present, when — the insult is not premeditated — when Pope Paul II sends Sigismondo's son-in-law, the lord of Camerino, to persuade Sigismondo to hand Rimini over to the church in exchange for the vicariate of Foligno and Spoleto, Rimini of the Malatesta of Romagna, this unageing man rode off to Rome sleepless, his face a havoc, to murder the Pope. He had to linger a day for the audience, during which time soberer, more mask-like intelligences remarked his manifested state. The following morning, burst in upon the conclave, Sigismondo found the Pope shielded by the still and scarlet rock of cardinals. For one moment he swayed, then in a surge falling at the feet of the fat pontiff, wept tears of blood.

---

[3] Pio II e la politica italiana nella lotta contro I Malatesta 1457–1463 Fratelli Drucker, Padua, 1911.

[4] "So they burnt our brother in effigy
A rare magnificent effigy costing 8 florins 14 bol
(*i.e.*, for the pair, as the first one wasn't a good enough likeness)
And Borso said the time was ill-suited
to tanta novita, such doings or innovations."

Ibid Malatesta Cantos,
Ezra Pound.

This piece of staging was preceded by the deliverance of the aforementioned invettiva which, according to Tizio, a Sienese chronicler of the sixteenth century, pleased Pio so much that he bestowed on the orator, Benzi, 300 moneys of gold. The oration contains amid a hundred little stories of evil, these, the fertile journalese technique of the "typical story," a few precise charges against Sigismondo none of which as Soranzo has shown (*vide* "Un'invettiva della curia romana contro Sigismondo Pandolpho Malatesta." Imola 1911, originally printed in the review "La Romagna") have any evidence to support them, nor in most cases is there an atom of circumstantial probability to suggest their justice. Disgusting war propaganda further fouled by the needy antithesis of Ciceronian prose. Thus, too, Pio in his commentaries — that other document by which posterity has condemned Sigismondo — "Mulieres, quorum filios e sacro fonte levavit, complures adulteriis polluit eorumque viros necavit." What a silly toy, this Latin! For text of the invettiva, *vide* Cod Chig 1192, pp. 52–92, Vatican Library. For bull of excommunication, Arch Vatic Pii 2 secretorum lib 7.c.2.

He triumphed earlier in war and in peace. Italy knew his quality. Even Alphonso had swallowed down his grievance, planning a marriage alliance because Sigismondo was the best fighter of the day. Violent the life but not extravagant. Constriction is never released; the same with Quattro Cento art, particularly the Tempio. Mass all at once, projection of stone, these quarries the opportunity for the Quattro Cento to create, just as the large earth, the driving rain, the prolific sun give birth to the blossom and compact fruit. Consciousness of stone, of the material as such, so that the stone itself palpitates, the flower of it drawn out by men upon the surface, arabesque in low relief rooted still to the inner core. Sigismondo was compressed with will to be manifest, so too the old stones which he touched, he and his like. Where there is such affinity with the medium, such absorption, then, with its technique, art is happiest, most care-free, more easily come by. The *sine qua non*, the Form, had been inspired by intercourse with stone in all conditions, the recumbent cylinders of Roman columns, monster ruins acrobatic with dangerous adhesion, the reinvestment with stone at that time in hand, of all the principal cities — so that the average Quattro Cento artist[5] drew out the subject set him with hardly a thought but for his fancy and the representational problem. Even when conscious as in our own day, the primal endeavour of art has never been more abstract. The nature of stone, its potential mass preoccupied the undermind of the Quattro Cento mason. The previous Gothic and Romanesque sculpture at their best, achieve an identical *illumination* of stone as, indeed, does all good sculpture and much architecture. The difference is that in the Quattro Cento, because of the liberation of human values, free not magical, because of this pressure to communicate expansion to all existence, the stone is, as it were, summoned to realize its own life; its flowering is a fight through to the surface. Stone has never meant so much, both the symbol and the stuff of mass; and apart from being by their mass objects dear to the new generous emotions, the heavy marbles of Ancient Rome were emblems of the new freedom, nearer to those men than as stock for imagination. All stone, then, was sacred, alive at the will of the old gods. We describe later in connection with Venice how kindred to the wild quarry were some of the children of the stone to which the artist had been the midwife.[6]

---

[5] I use the word artist rather than sculptor or architect because I consider the painters were also stone-struck.

But further, because of the truce with natural forces, because Humanism would contemplate an human answer, stone reveals its virtue via *naturalistic* representation of animal life, of Nature, and above all, of man and his individual emblems and ideals. Stone, the medium, its potential mass discovered by the general aspiration of the time, was what attracted, what without his knowing made a stone-cutter an artist. But because the stone is felt as answering to man, it will be sculpted particular, joyous, representational. Thus the swarm of cherubs, Donatellesque, shaking the marble dust from their eyes, thus the foliage, flowers that spread from the jambs of doorways and windows by Francesco di Giorgio; stoneblossom.

---

[6] Michael Angelo handed out a timely death to the dying Quattro Cento because he was supremely *conscious* of stone, that is to say, felt the apartness of the inanimate; necessarily so as, Italy disillusioned, the first zest of Humanism lost, a stone inanimate yet still seen as potent with mass, was left him to struggle with, to *force* to life and human representation.

Art is always something of a trick. Italian aesthetic since the Renaissance has never for one moment flagged in recognition of an imitative element, nor of the pleasures of virtuosity, thus all the time holding on to a gusto for trickery that may, or does, produce art. Anyone who enjoys a show of Italian marionettes should [7] be capable, with proper instruction, of understanding all art. For he appreciates the beauty in the trick of imitation realized by mechanical gestures that are generalizations of action, a treatment which in a more "classical" art, can be recognized as the use of conventions. Such generalization, the saying of much in the terms of a very limited medium, is the condition of all art. This feat of statement, to be art, must further possess so positive a quality that it is complete to itself, the rest of the world shut out. Such quality is best called Form and is generally associated with such descriptives as shape and composition. Form is a magic stuff as it were, the magic stuff which coagulates expression, an interrelation of the constituents always varying according to their nature and the disposition of the artist, one that bestows value with the generous hand of compound interest as imagined by a person yet uninitiated into the severity of mathematics. Not that Form descends on these constituents like a blessing; rather the idea of it must precede, must guide, must inspire the statement. Technique and inspiration are inseparable. Form as the inspirer, its manifestation as the object, of a technique in talking to the senses, and through the senses, to the mind — that is art. The realization of Form is a trick (whereas compound interest is not), a trick that must always be as new as life of which

---

[7] That is, if it were not for preconceptions.

Form is an ever-accompanying aspect, a trick played by the artist upon his unique emotion served by an individual technique. Now imitation of life accomplished by means however recondite, is not at all necessary even for painting or sculpture: (Design can stand alone). But just because the imitativeness possible to these two arts, necessitates treatment by generalization, a coördinating, a trick the same in genus as that of effecting Form, therefore conducive to this end; and further, because painting and sculpture are inspired by sensuous conviction and must have some link with visual life — the painting and the sculpture in which the artist has been justified in conceiving his problem as one primarily of representation, though comparatively rare, are the ones most prolific of art. Contact with the sensuous stimulus is immediate and continual, as, for example, in the painting of space, of three dimensions; while the incessant need for artful trickery in every detail, tightens the artist's grip and enhances his furore. The connection with life is of all importance. A completely abstract design, if it be the product of a formula, is art-less trickery because not a product of sensuous conviction or feeling.

Unlike ourselves who have had to discover what art is in order to create it, the Quattro Cento artist bothered not at all with Form. It was about him and within. He had no need for the conception. They were at liberty, those painters and sculptors, to produce art wholesale, to add to their sense of Form, to multiply the same, with conscious trickery via — obviously trickery's most "human" mode; one, too, that is inexhaustible — via imitativeness, naturalistic representation, at the expense of the less artful trickery of conventional treatment at that time reduced. We all should know how thin can be that imitativeness, how stereotyped, indeed, the tricks both of representation [8] and of its Form.[9] For me familiarity has bred a reasonable contempt before many of the "old masters." So mean, nothing behind, so trifling to us. How many more pictures one sees in the Rue de Seine, the modern exhibitions, than in a gallery like the one at Verona. These modern canvases, unweeded by time, show how high in certain quarters is the standard, extremely high. Perhaps one in fifty canvases is a picture. Few ages have done better (Picasso, Chirico and Othon Friesz), and if there is no one style, not even in the work of any one artist, the effort in the making of pictures, though the material be scant, is more solid than hitherto. But the difficulties of the painter are too great for large production, for the foundation of a school. Each picture tends to stand by itself, or there is a bunch of them dealing with an identical theme. The artist has imitators, not pupils. Until some definite value pervades our heterogeneous environment, the artist's faculties must be too largely engrossed with the invention of Form. He isn't free until his Form discovers increasing reciprocation in life.

We exuberant Europeans, children of the Renaissance, like to expend all our trickery on elaboration; stretching the potentialities of the medium to their utmost, we like to set out to please, we value the individualized, the humanistic stimulus. So it has come about that only one person in a thousand has any recognition of art when it occurs. Worse the prettiness and the "inspiration." Not a case of unsuccessful attempt, it never could be art. Europe has suffered as well for the lack of convention, in art as in life. We are the princes of vulgarity, champion perverters. We invented America, we English. Modern painters have had to become supremely conscious of art, find out exactly what it is, create Form solely from the matter of their personalities and their intelligence. All delights and fripperies, all emblematic creation intensifying contemporary existence have been impossible to the major artists.[10] They have learned how to make pictures with little help from life, just as philosophers possess abstractions in retirement: but inasmuch as some emblematic *reference* is essential, they have borrowed cleverly from their understanding rather than from their imagination. Thus the "literary" painting of Chirico who, making his own abstraction of the classical and Latin world, by discovering there something that is real according to our new discernment of rational and emotional integrity, has used these emotions to make pictures that by his treatment in line and colour of different materials and distances, stimulate to the highest degree sense of touch. Giorgio di Chirico is an Italian. He never completely eliminates representation. However abstract the design, it is conceived in three dimensions, never as flat pattern. The tie with space holds. European painting is bound up with the idea of three dimensional representations the reacting against which, entirely necessary for reasons sketched above, is a most honourable phase of that tradition. Painting emerges this moment with incomparable knowledge of its own intention. A definite advance, for however complete the return to representation, now that the bunk is cleared, if we humanize our world, a second Quattro Cento with Form digested (it happens or we perish), the pictorial problem cannot ever again be put as the naive one of imitation. Whether concerned with representation or not, the artist's sole business will be to "make" pictures.[11]

---

[8] *Sic* academicians with their tame pictorial virtuosities none of which have any meaning. These people have so little grip, so tiny an idea of picture, that they should never attempt more than a sketch, a very rough sketch, hopelessly unfinished work, lest the canvas be overladen with polite nonsense.

[9] *Sic* Raphael and Andrea del Sarto.

---

[10] As for less ambitious artists, Marie Laurencin has done a great deal with her pictures to humanize the possibilities of electric light and of high yet dainty tea at the Ritz.

Building and sculpture, particularly low relief, are the mediums of Quattro Cento expression. This parenthesis about painting comes in because in the course of the Cinque Cento, what Quattro Cento spirit was left, passed into painting, and there has survived down to our own day, already proposes the painting of the future. How this is so will be explained further on at the instance of Giorgione. The nucleus must be known at the source, if we are to remain Europeans, silenced every healing noise that there may be witness of Sigismondo's work. . . .

---

[11] What this implies should have been elucidated by the foregoing. This attitude of 'making' pictures must be attributed even to the Quattro Cento painters who for purposes of dissertation we have cited antithetically. A matter of degree, of course, the point being that far superior aesthetic knowledge, fruit of our trouble, already promises, when digested, a superior art — IF life will allow of it.

Adrian Stokes

(*To Be Concluded*)

THE GATES OF THE COMPASS[1]

I

MEMORY

THE huntsman riding through the fogs of dawn
Lifts to his lips the horn of twisted gold
And blows two bell-like notes through glen and hollow
Mournfully keen as smoke of autumn leaves.
For ever young he rides a dying horse,
For ever on the chase though no stag flies,
Attended only by those double echoes
The soul and flesh, the day and night of time.
Until the blindfold of the fog between
His eyes and the far reaches of the day
Grows thin, and all around him he beholds
A countryside bathed in the light of dream.
And there dismounting, he goes forth alone
And blows the single golden note of peace.

If from all memories you raveled one
Down the dark labyrinth of mind, what doors
Would open and what vistas be revealed
Among the many pasts you have forgotten?
I ask you of your birthplace, and you tell
Of leafy streets, a frame house on a terrace,
An apple tree with boughs that touched the ground
And made a cave of cider-smelling earth.

---

[1] This poem is to be published complete, in four parts, in the near future.

But dive beneath your thoughts. There you remember
The new-flung planet flaming into space
When it gave birth to something kin to you
In the dim dawn of life. Dive farther yet
And you will find perhaps like a deep pearl
Sunk under leagues of troubled sea, your self.
If from all memories you raveled one
You could return behind time's double rhythm
And casting off the blindfold walls of space
Look clearly on what now is mystery.
But memory is frail and tenuous,
An evening cobweb drifting on the air
That weaves a rainbow down its wavering length.
Divides, entangles other strands, till soon
You are enmeshed in clinging gossamers
So subtle that to bind one to a thought
Were to destroy the airy fantasy.

Two bells that ring through fog, — what sorrow moves
Uneasily behind the curtained years?
Follow that memory until you see
A small boy grimy with the July heat
Sitting disconsolate upon the steps,
His eyes full, his chin cupped in his hands;
O many years ago, and yet you find
Your heart not uncompassionate of his.
The air was milky with the powder smoke
From firecrackers. All the afternoon
Two slow bells tuned a minor third apart
Clang after clang rang out the solemn news:
The Spanish fleet is sunk, the Spanish fleet

Is sunk at Santiago. . . . The Spanish fleet
The Spanish fleet is sunk at Santiago.
The tears stung through the grime upon your cheeks
And you were dully sure that through all time
This sorrow would not fade. Those were your ships
That had been sunk, you loved their sounding names
And all their strangeness; they were proud and golden
Armadas on the oceans of your fancy,
Freighted with the imaginings of days,
Each day a lifetime, now they were yours no longer,
Nor ships, nor cargo, nor the dreams of them.
The elegant *Vizcaya*, curved and gilded,
The slim *Teresa*, her long masts aslant,
The *Almirante Oquendo*, high of prow,
The *Cristóbal Colón*, her funnels set
Rakishly fore and aft the single mast,
And the destroyers, *Plutón* and *Furor*,
The pitiful, the vincible armada,
Scarce worth the Sunday morning's target practice.
You knew them all from keel to fighting-tops,
And saw the dawn-red waters of the harbour
As one by one against the shoreline hills
The doomed ships poured to gain the open sea.
The flames leapt from their funnels as they flew
And the foam fountained in a double jet
Before their prows; but speed, desperate speed
Was quite in vain. The grey ships hemmed them in,
The first gun boomed, a hundred others answered,
And the air whined and flickered with the shells.
As the first courser in a cavalry charge
Struck by a bullet jumps into the air
And stumbles to his death, the stricken ships

Reared to the sheet of flame, wallowed, and swung
In aimless curves, then brandishing their masts
Against the sky, cast up their gilded sterns
And burst with dull explosions undersea.
The two bells of that shabby triumph clang,
Still clang, the bells of victory still clang,
Unto this day time booms upon two bells
With drift of drizzling echoes in the mist,
For when your Spanish ships went down, you learned
That by whatever names they may be called,
Things beautiful and happy are foredoomed.
Your childish heart held more than childish woe
Not to be comforted till you should see
The Spanish fleet come sailing home from limbo,
And even fancy could not blur the knowledge
That they would never come, and that was ended.
There was a horror in the victory,
Something eternal left you at that moment
Confirmed apprentice to your master, Time.

Seize on another strand of memory
And follow. You were playing blind man's buff
With other children in a darkening room.
The bandage pressed so tight upon your eyes
That stars and flashes flickered to and fro.
You were bewildered as your playmates changed
To savage ambushes of touch and sound,
Brushing against you, pinching, plucking at you,
And muttering in far corners of the room.
You heard soft footsteps going away, and then
Nothing but silence. Were they gone? or hiding?
You waited a long while, grew slowly frightened,

Then cold with panic snatched the blindfold off
And stared into the void of a black room.
You were alone. Through the two open windows
Where the blue twilight glimmered, two bells clanged.
You whispered, "I must run into the hall."
Then with a voice that scarcely could be heard:
"Is anybody here?" "Of course, of course,
Turn up the gas. Darling, it's only a game,
Look here's your rabbit. Here is Doctor Bun.
Now Doctor Bun, tell him it was a game;
They didn't mean it; everything's all right."
And so your patent of mortality
Was sealed, both by the double note of time
And the dark walls of space, which hedged you in
Henceforth from the wide reaches of the day.

You tell me you were born . . . where was it then?
I have forgotten. Follow deeper still
To a world blind with steam through which the sun
Glimmers uncertainly with bloodshot light.
There you stand in ooze up to your ankles,
And all around except for where the sea
Whimpers along the edges of the marsh
The jungle closes in with drip of leaves
And gurgle of hot mud where bubbles swell
With vapour, puff, collapse, and swell again.
A scaly head comes bulging through the muck
And stares with witless and unwinking eyes.
Then the ground heaves, a tremor quivers through it,
The fog sighs palely with a lightning flash,
Low thunder booms, and from the middle sky
The echo travels back in minor thirds.

There in that shadowless expanse you stand
While something horrible you can not name
Gathers along your spine. The fog thickens
And then the horror is upon you. Night.

O well to live above these memories,
Well for your reason in his upper sky
To shine through the clear air of fact, nor pierce
Too deep into the fog of nether worlds.
O well for you . . . but think not to forget
The savage birthplace I remember for you.
Look at the pliant skin which clothes your hands, —
Look closer. . . . Ah, the lizard scales, the pores
Agape to breathe the hot steam of the marsh.
The jungle seethes, and lust with roving eyes
That shine through darkness, leaps upon despair
And mates with her. And when the wandering moon
Half-seen through never-lifting depth of fog
Has nine times closed her circle in the dawn
Despair brings forth the wonder-child of lust.
These were your parents in that early birthplace
And in the lowest marches of your mind
They prowl the jungle of the double thunder
Screaming against the filtered light of reason
As dogs behowl the moon, till reason's self,
Faint with the fumes from those primeval fens,
Swoons in the zenith. O desperate one,
Will you return to that dank world you left
Aeons ago, or plunging boldly through it
Traverse yet farther to that other day
Which lies beyond it, where the unbroken light
Before the worlds were, brought you into being.

If in the short progression of this earth
You have thrown wide the doors of life and seen
The jungle creatures, shrunk to tiny vermin
Scatter from sight among the mouldy walls,
And the vast trees, diminishing through ages,
Become the fronds of horsetail and of fern
You trample down on paths of afternoon,
You shall yet see all things that knew the jungle
Shrink while the spirit grows till it behold
This burnt-out planet smaller than an ember
Whirling from sight along an autumn wind.

At dawn when you awake from your short sleep
And the poor dream of living that you had,
You shall arise and wash your heart with laughter
Under the trees beside the shadowed waters.
Come, snatch the blindfold off, and hush the bells
That ring against the Spanish fleets of dream,
Behold around the final headland steaming,
Vizcaya, *Cristóbal Colón*, *Oquendo*,
Teresa, *Plutón*, *Furor*, — homeward bound.

ROBERT HILLYER

EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF AN ANCESTOR

WHAT a gold mine it was to come into the stable on an early morning that sparkled with rain and to start the horses tossing their manes on their shoulders, stamping and lashing with fury because she passed by them. Even more active was the one she slapped under the belly and threw the saddle over. She stood close to him, tapping him on the ribs with her knuckles until he blasted what breath there was in him straight out and drew his waist in tapering and fine. At the moment when she passed his head with the single bit in her hand he would stand quiet, venturing to crane out his head and nibble with his soft loose lips at her shoulder.

The smallest horse was the favorite, and when he saw her he lifted his trim hindlegs and shot them at the sides of the stall. His delicate hoofs ran like a regiment over the blackened timber. He kicked in a frenzy, but his eyes were precisely on every move she was making, and his teeth, small and sweet and unlike a horse's teeth, were ready to smile. Even with his ears flat as a rabbit's as he kicked there was a flicker of knowledge in the tips of them that waited patiently for her decision of whether she would fling the saddle over him or whether she would go on to another stall, leaving him ready to cry with impatience.

Her father was proud of the feminine ways there were in her, and especially of the choir voice she used in church. It was no pride to him to hear it turned hard and thin in her mouth to quiet a horse's ears when some fright had set them to fluttering on the beak of its head. But at a time when the Indian fires made a wall that blossomed and withered at night on three sides of the sky, this grandmother was known as one of the best horsewomen in Kansas.

They were used to seeing her riding with a sunbonnet on her head, not in pants, but with wide skirts hullaballooing out behind her in the wind. At this time of the century nobody was very particular about the great length of the distances covered, and a day's ride from one town to another was like nothing at all. Kansas was like any other place on the map to them, and there was nothing strange about it to their minds. The horses that grew up there were simple enough not to shy away from skirts that slapped at their sides, and reserved their skittishness for lightning or for the occasion of the moon rising suddenly at night out of the dust of the highway. Trains were no trouble to them, for they could see them only in the distance on an edge they never approached, and cows that they knew capable of ripping open their sides they had no antics for but cowardice. Smoke was another thing too remote to be taken into account. They were used to seeing it along the edge of the prairie, twisting up from the Indian encampments and becoming a part of the wind woven of many odors that blew through the long tunnels of their noses but never interfered.

To her father it was a real sorrow that a needle and thread were never seen in her fingers. His wife was dead and it seemed to him that he must set flowing in his daughter the streams of gentleness and love that cooled the blood of true women. The idea was that she be sweetened by the honey of the ambitions he had for her. There was this irritation in him that could not be quieted: her indifference to the things that were his, his house, or the color and strength of his beard, and her interest in the sumac trees at the time they were ripe, or the sky with the crows flying across it in search of the shortest distance between two points (and finding it with a dignity and patience that was a shame to mankind.)

Her father would listen for her to come down the hill from the stable, for she would often be singing aloud as she came around the side of it. It was he who had first taught her to ride, and even in the first months before year after year in the saddle had rubbed any tenderness out of her behind, he had seen her way with horses. What she had no pity for, but a kind of arrogance instead, was for the melting eyes, the rich false chocolate drops of despair in a horse's head. But a horse's eye rolled in the socket back at her in fear over his foaming shoulder, tied fast with its own bloody veins, was a treasure. Rather than see this fact in her, her father preferred to lower his gaze and contemplate the patent tips of his boots.

One day as she was coming down from the stable he heard this miracle: she was singing and her voice struck some hollow in the opposite hill and curved and warbled there like the voice of a second singer. For a full minute he stood listening while the two voices sung together, her own voice deep and voluptuous and full like that of an older woman, and the other voice fresh and thin singing always a note or two behind the other. Once she rounded the side of the barn there was nothing more of it, and she came down singing, and not suspecting that the other hill had taken the notes out of her mouth and piped them back at her father.

To please him maybe, but he was never sure enough if it were for that, she'd do the things that were to be done in the kitchen. She could stuff a cod very nicely, stitch up its belly and see that it baked. From the French side she had learned to put fresh mackerel in kegs with white wine and lemon peel and a bouquet of spice. But on these occasions her beautiful red hair would be pulled back from her face, tight into a net at the back of her head, as naturally as if it had of itself recoiled in distaste from the monotony of the tasks performed before it.

There was a special flavor to the snuffle that a mount splattered out of his nose on the wind and back onto the face and mouth. What a feast of splatters when she would come out from a long time in the kitchen and walk in upon the beasts who were stamping and sick with impatience for her in the barn. She would find them sick of every hole in the stall-boards, and of the hay-fleas jumping through the fodder in the manger, and of the soft balls of manure packed solid in their hoofs. An ovation of splatters would shower out before her. It was early fall and black as a pocket when she came out from a whole day in the house and saddled the smallest horse and rode him out the door.

Her father saw her riding off alone this way and he sat home thinking of the things that might become of his daughter. He sat away from the window thinking that the sight of the darkness outside was no help to him and that with his paper down on his knees and his eyes closed he was better off. Outside she was riding away, any way, hammering off through the darkness with nobody knowing what was going on inside her or outside her, or what she was filled with, the hoofs of the horse hammering tack-tracks in the blackness that was maybe the road, or the dust, or the prairie that blew richly from side to side. Her father was thinking that someday she might go off and be married, and he was willing for her to marry a gentleman some day, but these were not the feminine ways he thought of stirring in her. He was more concerned with the cooking and the sewing ways that would be a comfort to him and keep him to his own satisfaction.

The thought of her marrying made him think of the schoolmaster who was the only gentleman in the countryside. He sat with the points of the fingers of his two hands together and with his elbows resting on the arms of his rocking-chair. He sat rocking gently back and forth with his thoughts, and then it came to him that early in the evening he had seen the young schoolmaster walking out as well onto the prairie. He had sat by the window watching the small strong figure of the schoolmaster making his way up the road over the prairie, and he began wondering how it would be to have the schoolmaster in the family, married off to his daughter and living with them there every day in the house. This was a quiet enough thought to him and it kept him rocking gently back and forth for awhile.

But with his daughter off in the night this way he became restless, and presently he started up and found himself at the window looking out for her. He was surprised to find that in the little time he had been sitting in his chair the moon had come up and was lighting up all the country around. He could see very clearly the soft white flowering goldenrod, white as flax under the moon, and the deep valleys and gulfs of the whole blossoming prairie. All along the edge of it were the Indian fires burning hard and bright as peonies.

He asked himself what in the world his daughter could be doing out at this time of the night. It was such a strange thing that he crossed the room and went up the stairs that had a narrow ribbon of red carpet running down the middle of them like a spine. He opened the door of her room and he looked in, but the room was empty. Only with the lamp in his hand he saw something that caught his eye. It was the corner of a volume sticking out from under her folded quilt. Maybe she had intended to hide it away in her quilt, but the old man took it out by the end and turned its face up to the light. Poetry it was, he saw, with pictures engraved through it of a kind that brought the blood flying to his face. His fingers trembled on the fly-leaf and there he saw the name of the schoolmaster inscribed in the young man's long leaning hand, while the book itself had been left open at the picture entitled the "Creation of Eve." Under it he read the words the poet had written:

> . . . To the Nuptial Bowre
> I led her blushing like the Morn: all Heav'n
> And happie Constellations on that houre
> Shed thir selectest influence; the Earth
> Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;
> Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Aires
> Whisper'd it to the Woods, and from thir wings
> Flung Rose, flung Odours from the spicie Shrub,
> Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night
> Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Eevening Starr
> On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp.

You fine example to the young, screamed the father's mind. You creeping out into the night to do what harm you can, creeping out and doing God knows what harm, God knows. He went quivering down the stairs, his mind in a fury. The low educated fellow forgetting his precious learning and out after the poor girl after dark on the prairie, he was thinking. Very clearly in his rage he could see the meeting of the eyebrows over the schoolmaster's nose, so hateful had he become to him, seeing them in detail, the black sprinkling of hairs that grew down between the schoolmaster's eyes. In his mind he thought of every part of the young man's face, and especially of the pores in the wings of his nose, and he began to walk back and forth in a fury in the house.

The horse on which the grandmother was riding had come to some kind of incline in the ground, and there he slowed his pace and began feeling his way with great delicacy through the bushes that flowed back over his thin knees. The grandmother's hands let the rein ride loose on his neck, and he flicked his ears forward and back in the dark for some sound from her. He kept chewing with his teeth at the bit in his mouth and tossing the rings of the mouthpiece so that they rang aloud. There was no movement even in her legs that hung down around his belly, and with the interest of selecting his own way absorbing him he watched the moon coming up without any display of fear, straining his ears almost out of his head as he followed it edging up ahead of him through the prairie-grass.

It was at this moment that he was startled by a faint stir in the bushes, and to quiet his heart's beating he drew several long cool blasts into his lungs the better to listen for what was to come. No help was given him by the grandmother who had never before abandoned him to his own wits, and trying to keep his head clear and away from fright he was left to discover all by himself that the wind had risen with the moon.

After the first moment it went out of his head to make a scene about the wind and he went on, pointing his ears to the sound of it in the grass and clicking his heels sharply on every stone he passed over. The wind was lifting off the bunches of white feather from the milkweed pods that had burst dry and floury in the September night. It was taking the ripe milkweed seeds with the cotton crowning them and blowing them over the crust of the prairie. First it was this, a simple rising and falling of the breath as the tufted seeds went, and then as fold of the wind opened on fold, out they came in a tide leaving the empty husks rattling and hissing like snakes behind them.

Presently the milkweed blow had strengthened so that it was sweeping across the whole upper reaches of the prairie. To the eye it seemed knee-deep and ravenous, but it came only to the crests of the little horse's hoofs and there washed delicately about them. He gave many humorous leaps and cavorts in the blowing tide, spraying it with splutter from his nose and sidling prettily up to the moon. Only when he ventured a sharp glance out over any distance did the terror of the enormous shifting plain, seething as it was with the milkweed blow, disturb him.

This was tame idle sport, suited to ladies, this romping in the milkweed cotton across the miles of pie-crust. Suddenly he felt this anger in the grandmother's knees that caught and swung him about in the wind. Without any regard for him at all, so that he was in a quiver of admiration and love for her, she jerked him up and back, rearing his wild head high, with his front hoofs left clawing at the space that yapped under them. She urged him to such a frenzy of kicking that he was ready to faint with delight. Even had she wished to now she could never have calmed him, and she started putting him over bushes and barriers, setting his head to them and stretching him thin as a string to save the smooth nut of his belly from scraping, reeling him so close to the few pine trunks that streamed up like torrents that he leapt sideways to save his fair coat from ripping open on the spikes of them. It was a long way to travel back, but he never stopped until his hoofs thundered into the barn that had shrunk too small for him. There he stood in the darkness, wet and throbbing like a heart cut out of the body.

The leap of the grandmother down off his back startled him into such terror that he sprang off as light as a frog across the boards of the floor. The leather of the saddle was streaming with his sweat, and after she had stripped him she brushed him down quickly and slapped him into his stall.

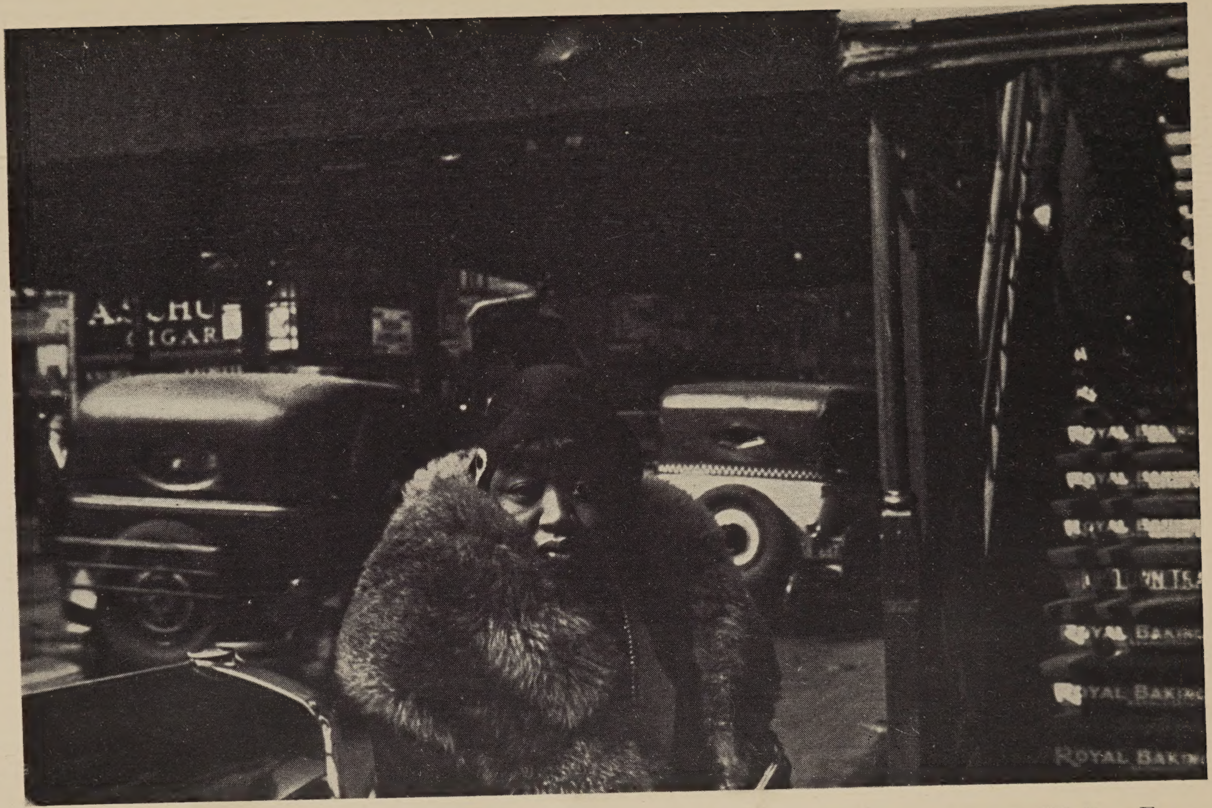
In the parlor of the house the father was sitting quite still at the table. He was asking himself in great pity how he was to know what had become of her during the night. A great many things that had nothing to do with it went through his mind, and one thing was that it was sad to have no one of his own time to talk to. When she came into the room she was there in front of him in the same way that the roses on the floor were woven straight across the rug. Where have you been to, he wanted to say to her, but he could not bring himself to speak. With someone of his own years, maybe, speech would already have been running nimble between them. He was ready to say right out that he had seen the schoolmaster walking out early in the evening up on the road that led nowhere except out onto the prairie. Well, now, what have you been up to with the schoolmaster? he was ready to say.

But the grandmother in anger had picked up her book from the table and put it close to her under her arm. In his sorrow for himself the father turned his head away from the sight of her. With this woman in the room with him he was beginning to see the poor little schoolmaster, the poor squat little periwinkle with his long nose always thrust away in a book. He began to remember that the horse his daughter had been out riding all night had once backed up on just such a little whipper-snapper as was the schoolmaster and kicked his skull into a cocked hat. He began to worry for the sake of the schoolmaster, who was such a timid little fellow and not used to Kansas who might get into harm's way.

The father kept turning his head away from the sight of this woman. She stood by the table with her eyes staring like a hawk's eyes straight into the oil lamp's blaze. The farm and the prairie, he thought in anger, and the sky with the moon in it would only be remembered because this woman would carry them off in her hard heart.

"What have you done to the schoolmaster?" he wanted to say to her. The words were right there in his mouth but he couldn't get them out.

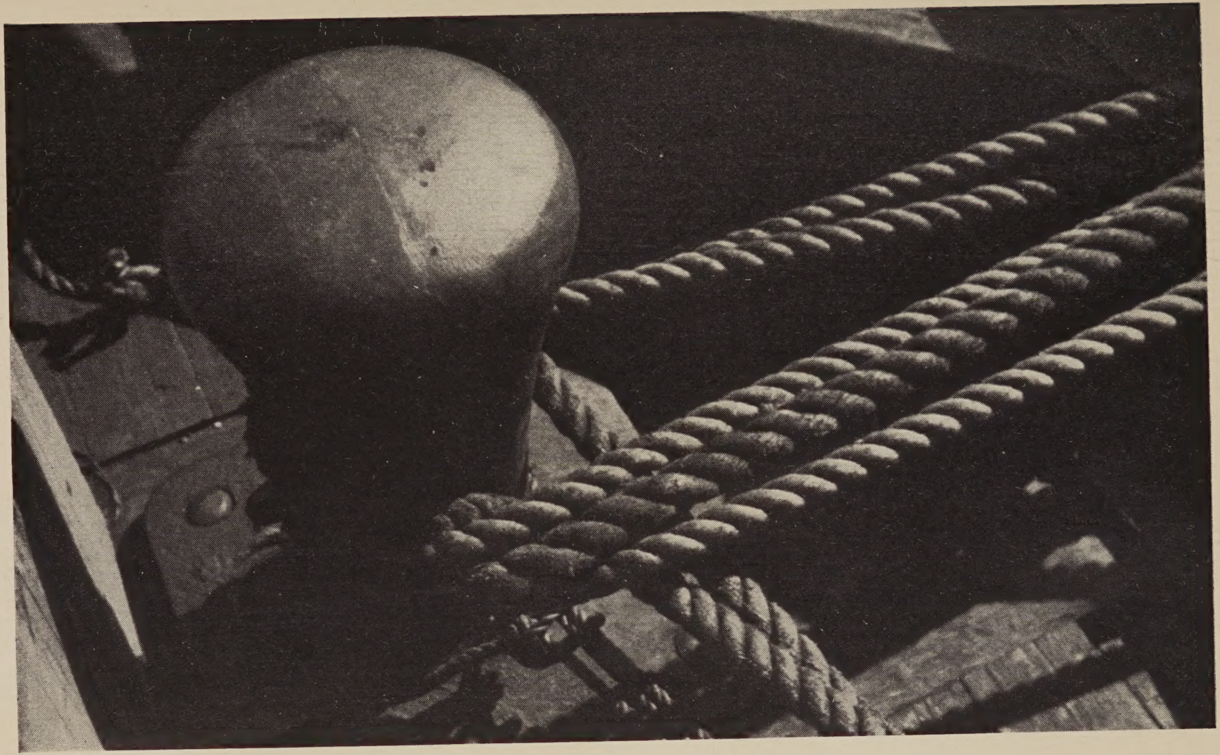
Kay Boyle



Sixth Avenue

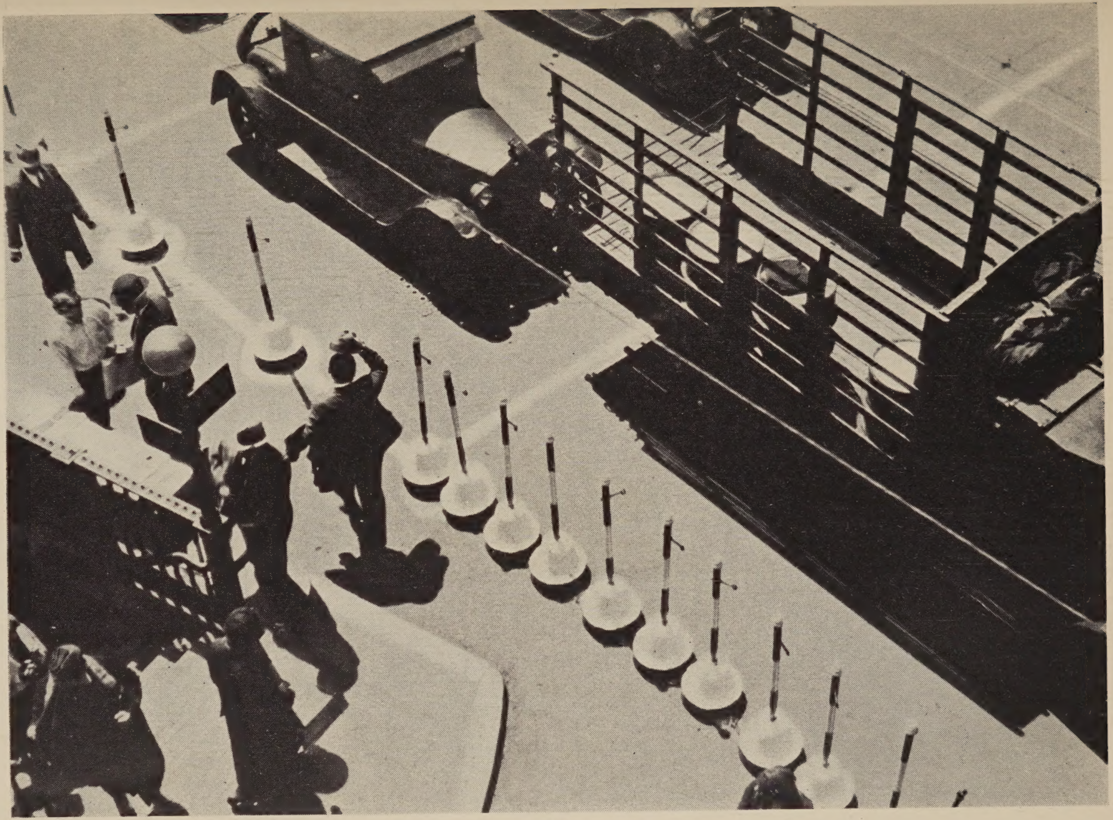
Walker Evans

Wash Day Walker Evans



Port of New York

Walker Evans



Traffic

Walker Evans

A MONUMENT AMONG THE WINDS

HERE under the street-light, to think,
while my shadow shakes with the wind-shaken light:
blood must be bitter to give
heat to a soul in this cold.
— But see these others, the bent forms
struggling, driven on, seeking
a quiet end — or any end at all: these faces,
quiet in the great shrouds
of memory falling over them.

(See now
the lean dark ships riding at loss
before white headlands: the beautiful
grey fog alive in the rigging.)

Such beauty is a little stiff with the cold winds
of knowledge: beneath these frozen faces
the rigid forms — their naked fates.

To stand under the light with such
patience, of a winter evening,
as freezes the feet and ears; to think
the world's knowledge sharpens these winds.

The vague, haughty faces
in the glassy waves of memory.
I am tossed among them, these others' lives.

To see and to be seen, a prayer;
to be tossed upon the shameless winds so I
be loved and hated well by strangers.
To know and to be known; in the heart of winds
blood must be bitter with knowledge to give
heat to a soul. — Thus I am seen;
eyes go hard against me lest they
go blind: in such scrutiny as I suffer
the world cringes among the whirlwinds.

(Look into thy heart, thou cringing boy,
in the dark whirlwind the taut
figures racing, a little bloodied.)

These others' lives.
Here under this light I reach out to clutch
for a moment the uncertain ends of life, I reach
for the fleet-furred owls I dreamed
had screeched above me.
I see my shadow tottering before me.

(Here is one man with the great pride
of peace slumbering in forgetful eyes,
and the winds drifting apart around him.
I cannot even remember him so gentle he was.)

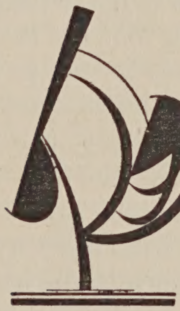
I reach
for the rare, warm currents I dreamed
among these steady blasts, and am
plunged in a blind battle: behind
each racing figure runs
a pack of yelping ghosts, the heart's
shadows, savage in the northern gales.

A MONUMENT AMONG THE WINDS

(To learn new violence and new voids,
the deadly powers of communion:
so much to learn another's soul.)

Here under the street-light in the cold tumult
old memory thickens and breath
is difficult.
(And the world rides in a whirlwind.)
What better effigy can I have
than this my shadow,
time-eaten, tottering, a monument
falling among the winds?

R. P. Blackmur



HENRY ADAMS
A CRITICISM IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

PART III

Chapter VIII
Wanderings (1890–1904)

SORROW set Henry Adams wandering — to the South Seas, — to Australia, Ceylon, Egypt. He sent back letters to his niece, full of humor through his tears, as it were. The letters, of themselves, often made little, tender stories fraught with the simple narrative genius of a Tolstoy: "The canoe is a dug-out; the trunk of a tree, chopped out with an adze, and held steady by a rough outrigger which rests on the water. With me alone in it, the boat is very steady, and rides easily on any breaker that is not so high as to flop over the edge. When two persons are in it, especially when they are large, the canoe is not so steady, as I found out yesterday when I took La Farge out for the first time. Then I could do nothing with it. The wind and current were strong and the wretched canoe would not head any way but broadside to the current. Still we drifted down to the harbor point, to see the sunset and then paddled back. Suddenly, without apparent cause, the canoe slowly leaned over, and tipped us both into the water. The water was not a foot deep, and I might just as well have stepped out, for I always go barefoot on the water, with linen trousers rolled to my knees; but the thing did it so gently that I was too late, and I am still wondering why it should have chosen that instant, rather than any other, to play us such a trick. Anyway, both La Farge and I were soused in the water, and we were just opposite the British Consulate, on a Sunday afternoon. Some little girls, about Molly's age or size, who were playing on the beach, laughed uproariously at us, and then ran out, crying in Samoan, 'Wait, Akamu' — that's my name, Akamu, Atamu, Adam, out of their Bible — and very soon swashed the water out of the canoe and set us going again, shoving us along through the water." [1]

The year 1892 found Adams again in London, this time in a hospital. After his recovery he sailed for home and then went on to Chicago. But the East still drew him and he went back, if "only to sleep forever in the trade-winds under the southern stars, wandering over the dark purple ocean, with its purple sense of solitude and void." [2]

From Guada'-C-Jara, on December 12, 1894, he sent a tentative communication, to the American Historical Society, on the Tendency of History. "Evidently I am fitted only to be an absent president," he wrote, "and you will pardon a defect which is clearly not official, but a condition of the man." [3]

And, some months later, he wrote to John Hay: "Once La Farge and I, on our rambles, stopped for an hour to meditate under the sacred Bo-tree of Buddha in the ruined and deserted city of Amuradjapura in the jungle of Ceylon; and, then, resuming our course, we presently found ourselves on the quiet bosom of the Indian Ocean. Perhaps I was a little bored by the calm of the tropical sea, or perhaps it was the greater calm of Buddha that bored me. At all events I amused a tedious day or two by jotting down in a notebook the lines which you profess to want. They are yours. Do not let them go further."

---

[1] *Letters to a Niece*, p. 36.
[2] *The Education*, p. 316.
[3] *The Degradation*, p. 125.

As far as it is known, Adams resorted to verse for the expression of his thoughts only twice in his life.

> "The Buddha, known to men by many names —
> Siddartha, Sakya Muni, Blessed One —
> Sat in the forest, as had been his wont
> These many years since he attained perfection;
> In silent thought, abstraction, purity,
> His eyes fixed on the Lotus in his hand,
> He meditated on the perfect Life,
> While his disciples, sitting round him, waited
> His words of teaching, every syllable
> More and more precious as the Master gently
> Warned them how near was come his day of parting.
> In silence, as the Master gave example,
> They meditated on the Path and Law,
> Till one, Malunka, looking up and speaking,
> Said to the Buddha: 'O Omniscient One,
> Teach us, if such be in the Perfect Way,
> Whether the World exists eternally.'"

Buddhas take long in answering and in the end they merely bend their eyes to fix them upon the Lotus. Ironically, to Adams who contemplated all his life, the young man found wisdom in the far more practical Brahman, whose entire wisdom lay in three words: Think not! Strike! The young Henry Adams had learned that this was education; the practical life was to remain part of him till the end. After all — according to the Veda — the beginning contained the end; the universal had no limit. In the end, all Thought was identical; travelling through constant contradictions it returned upon itself in silence. The fates of Buddha and the Brahman were not essentially different:

> "Your master, you, and I, all wise men,
> Have one sole purpose which we never lose:
> Through different paths we each seek to attain,
> Sooner or later, as our paths allow,
> A perfect union with the single Spirit.
> Gautama's way is best, but all are good.
> He breaks a path at once to what he seeks.
> By silence and absorption he unites
> His soul with the great soul from which it started.
> But we, who cannot fly the world, must seek
> To live two separate lives; one, in the world
> Which we must ever seem to treat as real;
> The other in ourselves, behind a veil
> Not to be raised without disturbing both."

Impelled to expression, Adams had solved for himself a practical ethics. Like Spinoza, or any humble oriental, he accepted the concept of necessity, so as not to perish among the follies of his own reflection. Yet when he returned to the world, he needed, as he wrote, no noble way to teach him freedom amid the clamor of a world of slaves; no Lotus to love purity where life is else corruption.

In Paris, in 1901, he lingered over memories of his recent experiences. He had been adopted in Tahiti into the principal clan by the old chiefess, and given the native name of Taura Atua. The old queen had been kind to him and in a letter Adams remembered her as pure native who spoke no foreign language. "She is sixty-eight years old and refuses to sit at table with us but sits on the floor in the old native way, and is a very great person indeed. In the evenings we lay down on the mats about her, and she told us of the old Tahiti people, who were much more interesting than now. She told us, too, long native legends about wonderful princesses and princes, who did astonishing things in astonishing ways, like Polynesian Arabian nights."[4] Adams wrote down these legends, and printed them, in a private publication called *Tahiti*, as the memoirs of Arii Taimai, afterwards Mrs. Salmon. The style of the book was purposely ingenuous, but the work was more than translation. It was a romantic history, written perhaps at Hay's suggestion of 1890: "I have just read Daudet's 'Port Tarascon.' It is his definite Waterloo — everything is manqué. Now is your chance. Do a South Sea book, comme il n'y en a pas. It is a felt want."[5]

Adams' mind revelled in a society where women, as under most primitive institutions, shared equal sovereignty with men; where they not only caused wars but directed them. In Harvard, and as editor of the *North American*, he had read widely in works of anthropology; but he had, perhaps, never dreamt of studying at close range, a society as old as India; a people, subject to the intoxication of Kava, moving in canoes through shallow waters, quarreling always over its women, white of skin, and round of figure. Adams mastered poems and legends, and rendered each with the proper sentiment of precise phrase and cadence:

"'Teva the rain, Teva the wind,
Teva the roe, the roe dear to Ahurei.'

I suppose it means that Teva is strong and swift like the rain and wind, and numerous like the roe of fish; but I do not know why Ahurei loved fished-roe."[6]

"This visitor, our first ancestor, was what Europeans call a demi-god; he was only half human; the other half was fish, or shark-god; and he swam from the ocean, through the reef, into the Vaihiria river, where he came ashore, and introduced himself as Vari Mataauhoe. The chiefess received him with the hospitality which was common to the legends of most oriental races, and Vari Mataauhoe took up his residence with Hototu; but after their intimacy had lasted some time, one day, when they were together, Hototu's dog came into the house and showed his affection for his mistress by licking her face, or, as we should say, kissing her, although in those days the word was unknown, for Polynesians never kissed each other, but only touched noses as an affectionate greeting. At this, the man-shark fell into a mood of reflection, and after turning the subject in his mind, decided that the fault was so grave as to require him, as a person of refinement, to abandon Hototu: 'You have been untrue to your husband with me,' he told her, 'you may be untrue to me with the dog.'" [7]

---

[4] *Letters to a Niece*, p. 12.

[5] *Thayer's Life of Hay*, II, 86.

[6] *Tahiti*, Chapter I.

"A boy was born, and, as foretold, in rain and wind." [8]

The husband's pride of generosity overcomes his desire for vengeance, and he gives his wife away to her lover: "Take, then, your wife! Taurua, my friend! We are separated, she and I! Taurua, the morning star to me. For her beauty I would die. You were mine, but now — take, then, Taurua! my friend! we are separated! She and I!" [9]

Adams also rendered Aromaiterai's *Lament*, which recalls the Anglo-Saxon *Wanderer:*

"'From Matoe I look toward my land Tetianina, the mount Tearatapu, the valley Temaite, my drove of pigs on Mouurahi, the great mountain. Mist hides the mountain.

---

[7] *Tahiti*, Chap. II.

[8] *Tahiti*, p. 19.

[9] *Tahiti*, p. 27.

My cloak is spread. Oh that the rain clear away, that I may see the great mountain. Aue! Alas! the wall of Mapuhi, dear land of mine!

"'The drums that sound above Fareura draw to me the winds of the South for a fan to the Chief Aromaiterai. (I long for) the sight of my home.'"

"Nothing could well be simpler," wrote Adams, "and if perfect simplicity is a beauty or homesickness is poetic, even a foreigner who never has seen or heard of Papara can understand that the Tevas, who are not in the least introspective and who never analyze their sensations or read Browning or Wordsworth, should ask no more. 'There is my field!' Aromaiterai laments; 'There is my hill! there is my mountain-grove, my drove of pigs! How I wish I were there!' Aromaiterai used no more words; but each word calls up a picture to the singer, and what more can any poet do.

"Europeans, who are puzzled to understand what the early races mean by poetry look for rhythm as likely to explain a secret which they cannot guess from the sense of words; but Polynesian rhythm is, if anything, rather more unintelligible to European ears than the images which are presented by the words. Tahitian poetry has rhythm, but it is chiefly caused by closing each strophe or stanza by an artificial, long drawn e-e-e-e. The song is sung with such rapidity of articulation that no European can approach or even represent it in musical notation." [10]

His work of love completed, Henry Adams lived quietly.

---

[10] *Tahiti*, pp. 35, 36.

CHAPTER IX

Palladium (1904–1909)

BETWEEN repeated voyages from Paris to Washington, and back again, Adams continued to live in silence. The tendency of history still weighed on his mind, when at the Great Exposition of 1900 the dynamo became, to him, a symbol of infinity. "As he grew accustomed to the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the cross. The planet itself seemed less impressive in its old-fashioned deliberate, annual or daily revolution, than this huge wheel, revolving within arm's length at some vertiginous speed; and barely murmuring — scarcely humming an audible warning to stand a hair's breadth further for respect of power — while it would not wake the baby lying close against its frame. Before the end, one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force." . . . "And thus it happened that, after ten years' pursuit, he found himself lying in the gallery of machines, at the Great Exposition of 1900, his historical neck broken by the sudden eruption of forces totally new." [11]

Man "was an acrobat, with a dwarf on his back, crossing a chasm on a slack-rope, and commonly breaking his neck. By the path of the newest science, one saw no unity ahead — nothing but a dissolving mind — and the historian felt himself driven back on thought as one continuous Force, without Race, Sex, School, Country or Church. . . . Any schoolboy could see that man as a force must be measured by motion, from a fixed point. Psychology helped here by suggesting a unit — the point of history when man held the highest idea of himself as a unit in a unified universe. Eight or ten years of study had led Adams to think he might use the century 1150–1250 expressed in Amiens Cathedral and the works of Thomas Aquinas, as the unit from which he might measure motion down to his own time, without assuming anything as true or untrue, except relation. The movement might be studied at once in philosophy and mechanics. Setting himself to the task, he began a volume which he mentally knew as *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres: A Study of Thirteenth-Century Unity*. From that point he proposed to fix a position for himself, which he could label: *The Education of Henry Adams: A Study of Twentieth-Century Multiplicity*. With the help of these two points of relation, he hoped to project his lines forward and backward indefinitely, subject to correction from anyone who should know better. Thereupon, he sailed for home." [12]

---

[11] *The Education*, pp. 380–382.

Henceforward, the historian was to reflect on man's education from the Palladium of culture. "For years past, incited by John La Farge, Adams had devoted his summer schooling to the study of (the Virgin's) Glass at Chartres and elsewhere, and if the automobile had one *vitesse* more useful than another, it was that of a century a minute; that of passing from one century to another without break. The centuries dropped like autumn in one's road, and one was not fined for running over them too fast. When the thirteenth lost breath, the fourteenth caught on, and the sixteenth ran close ahead . . . the ocean of religion, which had flooded France, broke into Shelley's light dissolved in star-showers thrown, which had left every remote village strewn with fragments that flashed like jewels, and were tossed into hidden clefts of peace and forgetfulness . . . he went on wooing, happy in the thought that at last he had found a mistress who could see no difference in the age of her lovers. Her own age had no time measure." [13]

---

[12] *The Education*, pp. 434–435.

He went straight to the Virgin at Chartres, "and asked her to show him God, face to face, as she did for St. Bernard. She replied, kindly as ever, as though she were still the young mother of to-day, with a sort of patient pity for masculine dullness: 'My dear outcast, what is it you seek? This is the Church of Christ! If you seek him through me, you are welcome, sinner or saint; but he and I are one. We are Love! We have little or nothing to do with God's other energies which are infinite, and concern us the less because our interest is only in man, and the infinite is not knowable to man. Yet if you are troubled by your ignorance, you see how I am surrounded by the masters of the schools! Ask them!" [14]

In his *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, Adams studied Saint Thomas Aquinas, as well as twelfth and thirteenth century glass and poetry and, to him, this was all: "Of all the elaborate symbolism which has been suggested for the Gothic cathedral, the most vital and most perfect may be that the slender nervure, the springing motion of the broken arch, the leap downwards of the flying buttress — the visible effort to throw off a visible strain — never let us forget that Faith only supports it, and that, if Faith fails, Heaven is lost. The equilibrium is visibly delicate beyond the line of safety; danger lurks in every stone. The peril of the heavy tower, of the restless vault, of the vagrant buttress; the uncertainty of logic, the inequalities of the syllogism, the irregularities of the mental mirror — all these haunting nightmares of the

---

[13] *The Education*, p. 470.

[14] *The Education*, p. 428.

Church are expressed as strongly by the Gothic cathedral as though it had been the cry of human suffering, and as no emotion had ever been expressed before or is likely to find expression again. The delight of its aspiration is flung up to the sky. The pathos of its self-distrust and anguish of doubt is buried in the earth as its last secret."[15]

No gleanings can give the power of a book whose harvest must be garnered in full. Yet one quotation must suffice for all — a translation of a lyric in *Aucassin and Nicolette:*

Estoilete, je te voi
Que la lune trait a soi.
Nicolete est aveuc toi,
M'amiete o le blond poil.
Je quid que dix le veut avoir
Por la lumiere de soir
Que par li plus cler soit.
Vien, amie, je te proie!
Ou monter voiuroie droit.
Que que fust au recaoir.
Que fuisse lassus a toi
Ja te baiseroi estroit
Se j'estoie fix a roi
S'afferies vos bien a moi
  Suer douce amie![16]

I can see you, little star,
That the moon draws through the air.
Nicolette is where you are,
My own love with the blond hair.
I think God must want her near
To shine down upon us here
That the evening be more clear.
Come down, dearest, to my prayer
Or I climb up where you are!
Though I fell, I would not care
If I once were with you there
I would kiss you closely, dear!
If a monarch's son I were
You should all my kingdom share,
  Sweet friend, sister!

In the song of a gentle creature, with eyes of vair, whose muscular Christianity is ready to do for any heathen who has it in his head that he is pregnant, whose *courtoisie* is ready to scale heaven, Henry Adams expressed all his aspiration and all his pain.

"I think God must want her near
To shine down upon us here
That the evening be more clear."

---

[15] *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres,* p. 383.

[16] *Mont-Saint-Michel,* p. 240.

The lines are of a life broken in halves, of the same temper as Poe's Israfel — a little less artifice, more directness and simplicity.

In the *Mont-Saint-Michel*, whatever Adams translated, either the poetry of the court, or the chanson de geste, or the cathedral arch, or the miracles of Our Lady, he rendered not only the spirit of an age, but his own portrait. It may be grotesque to imagine him, like his tombeor, capering naked before the image of the Virgin in the shadow of the monastery of Clairvaux. But he was there exposed before the image.

Adams was no fanatic. He had not the extreme faith which makes of its thoughts a system — something to be put forward as a text. He even feared that his interpretation of the Middle Ages was not always true, and whether he was right or wrong would make a fool dispute. But the human significance, the poetry, of its life and society, he felt deeply, perhaps too sensibly for the world to see that he did. "Singularly enough, not one of Adams' many schools of education had ever drawn his attention to the opening lines of Lucretius, though they were perhaps the finest in all Latin literature, where the poet invoked Venus exactly as Dante invoked the Virgin:

"'Quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas.'"

After Henry Adams' death some verses were found in a little wallet of special papers — entitled "Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres." In life he had shown the poem only to one friend, "a sister in the twelfth century." This is the end of the prayer:

"A curious prayer, dear lady! is it not?
    Strangely unlike the prayers I prayed to you!
Stranger because you find me at this spot,
    Here, at your feet, asking your help anew. . . .

When your Byzantine portal still was young,
  I came here with my master Abailard;
When Ave Maria Stella was first sung,
  I joined to sing it here with Saint Bernard.

When Blanche set up your glorious Rose of France,
  In scholar's robes I waited on the Queen;
When good Saint Louis did his penitence,
  My prayer was deep like his: my faith was keen.

What loftier prize seven hundred years shall bring,
  What deadlier struggles for a larger air,
What immortality our strength shall wring
  From Time and Space, we may — or may not — care;

But years, or ages, or eternity,
  Will find me still before your throne,
Pondering the mystery of Maternity,
  Soul within Soul — Mother and Child in One!

Help me to see! not with my mimic sight —
  With yours! which carried radiance, like the sun,
Giving the rays you saw with — light in light —
  Tying all suns and stars and worlds in one.

Help me to know! not with my mocking art —
  With you, who knew yourself unbound by laws;
Gave God your strength, your life, your sight, your heart,
  And took from him the Thought that Is — the Cause.

Help me to feel! not with my insect sense, —
  With yours that felt all life alive in you;
Infinite heart beating at your expense;
  Infinite passion breathing the breath you drew!

Help me to bear! not my own baby load,
  But yours; who bore the failure of the light,
The strength, the knowledge and the thought of God —
  The futile folly of the Infinite!"

The poem prays not merely for an English scholar of Norman name, but for man. *The Education of Henry Adams* said no more, though it said things at greater length, in its dynamic theory of history and law of acceleration, with the same unusual emotion ordered by more than usual mind. If the *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* expressed his feeling, *The Education* displayed his humor that was at once the comic verging on the tragic. St. Gaudens once wrote to Adams: "You dear old Porcupinus Poeticus, you old Poeticus under a Bushelibus." And when the sculptor in a caricature bas-relief represented a head of Adams flying by means of celestial wings feathered with porcupine quills, and sent it to him, Adams, then in Paris, answered: "My dear St. Gaudens: Your winged and pennated child arrived yesterday by the grace of God and his vicar the Secretary of State, or his satellites Adee and Vignaud. As this is the only way in which the secretary will ever fulfill his promise of making me cardinal and Pope I can see why he thinks to satisfy me by giving me medallic rank through you. Docile as I always am to suggestion, I agree that the medal is probably worth more than the hat . . . Work! and make a lot of new porcupuses. I'm sorry you can't give Hay wings too, he needs them more than I who live in holes. Adieu!"

In his *Education* the "porcupus" flew on wings; he pictured character and situation as could only a seventeenth century dean or an eighteenth century novelist. It might be remembered also that prior to Lytton Strachey came Henry Adams. But this was not all. In his descriptions and prose rhythms, Adams achieved nothing short of perfection: "Next to smell came taste, and the children knew the taste of everything they saw or touched, from pennyroyal and flagroot to the shell of a pignut and the letters of a spelling-book — the taste of A-B, A B suddenly revived on the boy's tongue sixty years afterwards." The last touch is cause enough for remembering the book.

CHAPTER X

Phase (1909–1910)

THE year 1908 made Henry Adams a septuagenarian. *The Education* had not yet been given to the public; Adams no longer dreamt of doing it. "A seal," as he put it, "dislikes to be worried to death in age by creatures that have not the strength or the teeth to kill him outright: . . . silence, next to good temper, was the mark of sense." [17] Even a seal in age, however, may feel solicitous for its young wildly flopping on ice-floes. They, too, might have a career in the circus. Adams was old, but the world was at no loss for students; and for them he explained history as science.

A Letter to American Teachers of History seems to have been written for the student who would never have access to any one of the hundred privately printed copies of *The Education*, and, in another sense, it was but a brilliant variation on an important paragraph in the earlier *Tendency of History:* "Any science assumes a necessary sequence of cause and effect, a force resulting in motion which cannot be other than what it is. Any science of history must be absolute, like other sciences, and must fix with mathematical certainty the path which human society has got to follow. That path can hardly lead toward the interests of all the great social organizations. We cannot conceive that it should help at the same time the church and state, property and communism, capital and poverty, science and religion, trade and art. Whatever may be its orbit, it must, at least for a time, point away from some of these forces towards others which are regarded as hostile. Conceivably, it might lead off in eccentric lines away from them all, but by no power of our imagination can we conceive that it should lead toward them all." [18]

---

[17] *The Education*, Chap. 35.

In his *Letter*, Adams — who left the processes of evolution to evolutionists and, as historian, found his interest in the reaction between mind and nature — realized the moral difficulties of teaching history as science, since degradation of energy in man and nature was its accepted first law. The *Letter* said nothing that was new. Yet where *The Education* reënforced perplexities and disillusion chapter by chapter, the *Letter* did similarly, paragraph by paragraph, quotation by quotation. Adams' amazing knowledge summoned to his aid the science of the twentieth century in all its phases, so that Thought appeared but the false name for truncated Will, and Will, itself, rendered ineffectual by Adams' variations on a theme macabre.

As mathematically insistent, and even more daring than the *Letter*, was the posthumous *Rule of Phase Applied to History*. Drawing a parallel between the physics of Willard Gibbs and History, Adams showed that Thought, in time, — like water or gas subjected to certain forces — passes through a variety of phases, or changes, or states of equilibrium; that a law of acceleration may be applied to these changes or directions of thought — a formula which describes force increasing in the direct ratio of its squares. If the human mind might be compared to a meteoroid, then, as "it approached the sun or center of attractive force, the attraction of one century squared itself to give the measure of attraction on the next." [19]

---

[18] *The Degradation*, p. 128.

"Supposing the Mechanical Phase to have lasted 300 years from 1600 to 1900, the next or Electric Phase would have a life equal to $\sqrt{300}$, or about seventeen years and a half, when — that is, in 1917 — it would pass into another or Ethereal Phase, which, for half a century, science has been promising, and which would last only $\sqrt{17.5}$, or about four years, and bring Thought to the limit of its possibilities in the year 1921. It may well be! Nothing whatever is beyond the range of possibility; but even if the life of the previous phase, 1600–1900, were extended another hundred years, the difference to the last term of the series would be negligible. In that case, the Ethereal Phase would last till about 2025.

"The mere fact that society should think in terms of Ether or the higher mathematics might mean little or much. According to the Phase Rule, it lived from remote ages in terms of fetish force, and passed from that into terms of mechanical force, which again led to terms of electric force, without fairly realizing what had happened except in slow social and political revolutions. Thought in terms of Ether means only Thought in terms of itself, or, in other words, pure Mathematics and Metaphysics, a stage often reached by individuals. At the utmost it could mean only the subsidence of the current into an ocean of potential thought, or mere consciousness, which is also possible, like static electricity. The only consequence might be an indefinitely long stationary period, such as John Stuart Mill foresaw. In that case, the current would merely cease to flow." [20]

Such a display of mind is either epoch-making or paradoxical. Prophecies nearly always come true; they depend on an interpretation of facts, and human beings are excellent interpreters. They cannot help noticing that, in unison with Adams' prediction, the year 1917 was really a turning point in history, that the year 1923 brought Einstein to America. Truth, however, is not the standard for judging Adams' essay. *Phase* is, at least, a true picture of Adams' mind, if not of objective facts. And those who can in a moment of seeming vision look around them and see the human product of the age, — the child, as Adams called him, of incalculable forces yet undetermined, — seeking, with his own disillusion, to avoid repetition — can sense the desires behind Adams' "ocean of potential thought, mere consciousness, like static electricity." In the human tragedy, or comedy, *vis inertia* has already been reached. And while it holds contemporary mind, a few may see that Henry Adams, even in disillusion, wrote poetry, and perhaps fact.

---

[19] *The Education*, p. 492.

[20] *Degradation*, pp. 308–309.

CHAPTER XI

"*There It Ended*" (1910–1914)

MOST afterthoughts of even great writers are no more than after-wit. Only trained philosophers can affect a countenance of peace before the finality of dead bones, or say that, somehow, the heart and mind reap of a second mowing. Henry Adams was candid with himself: when Clarence King left him, "he could only blunder back alone, helplessly, wearily, his eyes rather dim with tears; and when Hay died, it was time to go. The three friends had begun life together; and the last of the three had no motive — no attraction — to carry it on after the others had gone."[21]

---

[21] *The Education*, p. 505.

Yet a new generation had appeared overnight, as it were, and Henry Adams found himself part of it. There was no difficulty in keeping up with his age, not even with the poet-son of a Massachusetts senator. It was the fortune of Henry Adams to stand near, while such a plant blossomed and, still frail in fulfilment, declined with the morning.

In Paris, in 1901, Adams had tottered about with "Joe Stickney, talking Greek philosophy or recent poetry, or studying *Louise* at the Opera Comique, or discussing the charm of youth and the Seine with Bay (George Cabot) Lodge and his exquisite young wife."[22]

"Bay Lodge and Joe Stickney had given birth to the wholly new and original party of Conservative Christian Anarchists, to restore true poetry under the inspiration of the *Götterdämmerung*." One "wing of the anarchistic party consisted rigorously of but two members, Adams and Bay Lodge. The conservative Christian anarchist, as a party, drew life from Hegel and Schopenhauer rightly understood. By the necessity of their philosophical descent, each member of the fraternity denounced the other as unequal to his lofty task and inadequate to grasp it. Of course, no third member could be so much as considered, since the great principle of contradiction could be expressed only by opposites; and no agreement could be conceived because anarchy, by definition, must be chaos and collision, as in the kinetic theory of a perfect gas. Doubtless this law of contradiction was itself agreement, a restriction of personal liberty inconsistent with freedom; but the 'larger synthesis' admitted a limited agreement provided it were strictly confined to the end of larger contradiction. Thus the great end of all philosophy — the 'larger synthesis' — was attained, but the process was arduous, and while Adams, as the older member, assumed to declare the principle, Bay Lodge necessarily denied both the assumption and the principle in order to assure its truth."[23]

---

[22] *The Education*, p. 403.

It was in accord with Adams' nature to be amused by this night of the "larger synthesis" in which all cows are black. Bay Lodge was also amused, but not so much: he was young, and wrote long poetic dramas about it. There it ended: the poet, whom heaven had surrounded in his adolescence, who like any Brooke (Rupert) flung the confidence of his youth against fate, died a young man in 1909. Adams, who had been like a father to this boy was already seventy-one.

"In such labyrinths, the staff is a force almost more necessary than the legs; the pen becomes a sort of blind-man's dog, to keep him from falling into the gutters. The pen works for itself, and acts like a hand, modelling the plastic material over and over again to the form that suits it best. The form is never arbitrary, but is a sort of growth like crystallization, as any artist knows too well; for often the pencil or pen runs into side-paths and shapelessness, loses its relations, stops or is bogged. Then it has to return on its trail, and recover, if it can, its line of force. The result of a year's work depends more on what is struck out than on what is left in; on the sequence of the main lines of thought, than on their play or variety."[24]

Adams had ended his reveries on his education in 1905; in the life of his young friend, George Cabot Lodge, he saw education play its game all over again. The older man could well be quizzical through tears. "Consider the life of Bay," he might have mused, "so very like the song of the wave he

[23] *The Education,* pp. 405–406.

[24] *The Education,* p. 389.

sung about, falling on still shores as I have fallen, of a certain duration, it receded with the tide, and now the tide is neap. Dear Lodge, like Blake's sun-flower or Swinburne, he sought after a sweet golden clime. And he learned — not much — that the sun was not as round as the shield of his fathers. If I write down his brief life, I should be writing my *Education* all over again."

The Life of George Cabot Lodge was Henry Adams' last book. It implied more than it stated; between the lines, it wrote about Henry Adams:

"Boys are naturally sensitive and shy. Even as men, a certain proportion of society, showed, from the time of the Puritans a marked reserve, so that one could never be quite sure in State Street, more than in Concord, that the lawyer or banker whom one consulted about drawing a deed or negotiating a loan, might not be consciously immersed in introspection, as his ancestors, two centuries before, had been absorbed in their chances of salvation. The latent contrasts of character were full of interest, and so well understood that any old Bostonian, familiar with family histories, could recall by scores the comedies and tragedies which had been due to a conscious or unconscious revolt against the suppression of instinct and imagination."[25]

"Poetry was a suppressed instinct; and except where, as in Longfellow, it kept the old character of ornament, it became a reaction against society, as in Emerson and the Concord School, or further away and more roughly, in Walt Whitman. Less and less it appeared, as in earlier ages, the natural favorite expression of society itself. In the last half of the nineteenth century, the poet became everywhere a rebel against his surroundings. What had been begun by Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley, was carried on by Algernon Swinburne in London or Paul Verlaine in Paris or Walt Whitman in Washington, by a common instinct of revolt. Even the atmosphere of Beacon Street was at times faintly redolent of Schopenhauer."[26]

---

[25] *The Life of G. C. Lodge*, p. 6.

This was the setting, and the biographer followed his subject through experiences which he himself had shared as a young man: Boston, Harvard, Paris, Berlin, war, singular friendships with women as well as men. If Adams had prayed to the Virgin as redeemer, Lodge had seen in Eve the redeemer of Cain, and had expressed as much in a drama. "All the men appeal to Eve," wrote Adams describing Lodge's *Cain*, "and then refuse to listen to her." Writing these words he must have thought of his own lines to the Virgin:

"If then I left you, it was not my crime
Or if a crime, it was not mine alone."

And writing what follows of Lodge, he might have believed it true of himself: "From first to last he identified himself with the energies of nature . . .; he did not invent images for amusement, but described himself in describing the energy."[27]

The Life of Lodge contained some beautiful writing; in inventing images, Adams described his finest thoughts: "From the earliest forms of mammal life, the mothers of fauns have been more in love with their offspring than with all else in existence; and when the mother has had the genius of love and sympathy, the passion of altruism, the instinct of taste and high-breeding, besides the commoner resources of intelligence and education, the faun returns the love, and is moulded by it into shape."[28]

---

[26] *The Life of G. C. Lodge*, p. 6.
[27] *Life of Lodge*, p. 14.

The little book of two hundred pages also contained some excellent literary criticism, at once philosophic and historic, yet always relevant to the subject in question. For Henry Adams was a capable critic, and knew that poetry must be treated as poetry. The analysis of Lodge's *Herakles* was as fine a piece of writing as Adams had ever written.

Old men stop writing books, though they often continue their studies and write letters. Adams, who was an excellent letter writer from the time he was twenty, kept on writing letters successfully; whether on various matters to Whitelaw Reid, or on John La Farge to Royal Cortissoz, or on his studies in the Chansons — the Guillaume and others — to Bliss Luquiens and Stanburrough Cook.

When Reid, in the position of ambassador to England, delivered an address on Byron at University College, in Nottingham, in the winter of 1910, Adams wrote to him:

"Byron I envy you. One can hardly keep one's hands off him. His is one of the few really amusing figures in the British Pantheon. One can praise or criticize, admire or detract, as one likes, in perfect safety. One is sure to be more or less right. One need not even treat him seriously. He did not treat himself seriously, and would have jibed us for it. He is the only complex figure, except perhaps Sheridan, in the whole galaxy. You saved yourself some ugly risks by keeping Shelley and Keats out of sight, who had nothing at all, that I can see in common with Byron, whose parallel is Chateaubriand or Voltaire. Curiously enough, the closest English parallel is certainly Disraeli. I wonder whether there was any Jew in Byron. There is certainly some Heine in him."

[28] *The Life of G. C. Lodge*, p. 11.

One of the last letters, from 1603 H Street, Washington, was written on December 29, 1914, to Luquiens:

"*My dear Sir*

Yesterday, my brother Charles sent me down your notice of the Chartres in your July (Yale) *Review*. Owing perhaps to the troubles of last summer, I had not seen, or heard of it and was much touched by its kindness and sympathy. Let me, at once, thank you for it, and express my regret for having failed to do so long ago. Of course we have had much else to think about, but we have still had time to push our studies of the Chansons until I think we are acquainted with them all — the music, I mean, for that is my attraction. We have sung them all, or all the best, and have copied or photographed all that we liked. The charm of the pursuit has almost obliterated that of the other studies, for indeed, I am quite serious in considering the Chatelain, Conon, the Vidame, etc. etc. as artistically the equals or superiors of the architects and glass workers. Doubtless the Chatelain, the Roi de Navarre, Conon etc. are the best; but what troubles me is that Gasse, who was placed almost first by his own age, should seem to us invariably dull and commonplace.

Throughout all the terrors and roars of German howitzers we have lived on "Seigneurs sachez" and "A vous amants," in France and England as here, and they alone have given us repose. Reims fell, but Thibaut rose.

Ever yrs

HENRY ADAMS"

A careful observer may note that Henry Adams addressed Mr. Luquiens as "My dear Sir." Old age is reluctant to trust itself to new friendships. Only Herrick could publish *Hesperides* at fifty-seven. Adams had many friends in his last years but in reality he lived more and more within himself. Life had done its worst; nature, as he once said, had educated herself to a singular sympathy for death. It was an easy matter to die like the Crusader with "Seigneurs sachez" and "A vous amants" on his lips.*

* NOTE: Written today, the Adams material would probably be related to (1) Russia

(Communism and the materialistic interpretation of history). (2) Recent science. (3) Psycho, — or, better, the liberation of the libido. (4) Gossip, and conjectures.

Well:

(1) Adams' lines on Russian inertia (references easily found in the Index to his *Education*) are some of the most pertinent on that Asian-Occidental country ever written. It is clear that Communism could not have come as a shock to the author of *Phase*. He was twenty years ahead of Spengler on the latter's own ground. He (Adams) knew all there was to know of Marx.

In *The Tendency of History* (1894) he indicated the gist of the matter in a number of "questions": "If it (a science of history) pointed to a socialistic triumph it would place us in an attitude of hostility toward existing institutions. Even supposing that our universities would permit their professors in this country to announce the scientific certainty of communistic triumphs, could Europe be equally liberal? Would property, on which the universities depend, allow such freedom of instruction? Would the state suffer its foundation to be destroyed? Would society as now constituted tolerate the open assertion of a necessity which should affirm its approaching overthrow?" In 1895, Henry was already sure that his family and himself were back numbers, and "that our so-called civilization has shown its movement, even at the centre, arrested. It has failed to concentrate further. Its next effort may succeed, but it is more likely to be one of disintegration, with Russia for the eccentric on one side and America on the other . . ." ("Letter to Brooks," *Degradation*, p. 98).

To treat Henry Adams as the usual fin-de-siècle, slowly dying scion of a defunct American dynasty, à la "Marxian" interpretation of literature, is obviously a mistake. The great regret is that Adams did not live ten years more than eighty to write down such a force as Lenin.

(2) Recent science: Henry heralded all its difficulties, Einstein and mathematical philosophy in *Phase:* "If the physicist-historian is satisfied with neither of the known laws of mass, — astronomical or electric, — and cannot arrange his variables in any combination that will conform with a phase-sequence, no resource seems to remain but that of waiting until his physical problems shall be solved, and he shall be able to explain what Force is. As yet he knows almost as little of material as of immaterial substance. He is as perplexed before the phenomena of Heat, Light, Magnetism, Electricity, Gravitation, Attraction, Repulsion, Pressure, and the whole schedule of names used to indicate unknown elements, as before the common infinitely familiar fluctuations of his own Thought whose action is so astounding on the direction of his energies. Probably the solution of any one of the problems will give the solution for them all" (1909).

(3) The Virgin of Chartres was no escape to Adams, no sublimation of miasmic repressions; seeing imaginatively through her eyes he could clarify history, and mock at the barrenness of American woman and the impotence of American man. Which brings us to

(4) What of Adams? — and the none too hazardous guess that Adams' private life written up as is the fashion today would no doubt be a choice book of the many and the fortune of the few. But that may be left to those who are particularly interested.

April 21, 1928

HENRY ADAMS

CHAPTER XII

March 27, 1918

"HENRY ADAMS lies buried in Rock Creek Cemetery, in Washington. The casual visitor might perhaps notice, on a slight elevation, a group of shrubs and small trees making a circular enclosure. If he should step up into this concealed spot, he would see on the opposite side a polished marble seat; and placing himself there he would find himself facing a seated figure, done in bronze, loosely wrapped in a mantle, which, covering the body and the head, throws into strong relief a face of singular fascination. Whether man or woman, it would puzzle the observer to say. The eyes are half closed, in reverie rather than in sleep. The figure seems not to convey the sense either of life or death, of joy or sorrow, of hope or despair. It has lived but life is done; it has experienced all things, but is now oblivious of all; it has questioned, but questions no more. The casual visitor will perhaps approach the figure, looking for a symbol, a name, a date — some revelation. There is none. The level ground, carpeted with dead leaves, gives no indication of a grave beneath. It may be that the puzzled visitor will step outside, walk around the enclosure, examine the marble shaft against which the figure is placed; and, finding nothing there, return to the seat and look long at the strange face. What does he make of it — this level spot, these shrubs, this figure that speaks and yet is silent? Nothing — or what he will. Such was life to Henry Adams, who lived long, and questioned seriously, and would not be content with the dishonest or the facile answer." — Carl Becker.

Henry Adams, himself, once quoted Heine:

"Also fragen wir beständig,
Bis man uns mit einer Handvoll
Erde endlich stopft die Maüler,
Aber ist das eine Antwort?"

"Life has become almost intolerable," he said the day before his death, when the vandalism of war was diverting society. But in death, remembered one of his friends, he was found asleep, in the morning, with a look of thoughtful interest — almost of curiosity — upon his face.

"Dear Infant," he wrote in the spring, two years before, "Yesterday I walked in the spring woods, and met a fly. To that fly I said: 'Fly, do you want me to tell you the truth about yourself?' And that fly winked at me — carefully — and said, 'You be damned.' — They have told me that just seventy-eight times. They are not tired, but I am." To the last, the whimsicality which is not afraid to pique that inflated cynosure called man, the remarkable sense of portraiture, the imaginative bitterness and the sceptic probity which damns as a matter of course, remained his.

And if Henry Adams could return, as he suggests at the end of *The Education*, so that Heine's query might have an answer, he would perhaps not find any in dust stopping the mouth. Giving himself to friendship and to writing, he said as much by implication. This principle of silent acceptance seems to be the first with all clear and imaginative minds, with minds and hearts that remain, in spite of custom, effectively young.

Louis Zukofsky

May 7, 1924

A complete Bibliography will appear in the next issue.

TWO POEMS

VOYAGE IN OCTOBER

I WILL remember you and think on October water
On the sides of boats, and under keel,
Where fast cooling waters gathering their despair
Renounce blue days, and drift slowly where no ships are:
I will go now where October waters their garner despair of
color,
And murmur always to the white lands, the frozen skies,
And see on many deckrails your frail hands,
And the imprint of your shadowed head in mists
Where lost gulls wander,
I will see you on the deck chairs, your hands
Forever still and white, and hear your mind beaten with chill
music
Returning with October waters to the North, to the white, —
To the frozen skies:
I will watch (upon the prowrail) under a windy storm
Your hands reach outward to a greying moon when rain
comes,
While the colors of a late sea are whirled across the year:
I will go to October's fast red waters, slowly cooling,
And listen to the wheel of gulls' cry, and remember
Your hands, lying on deckrails, and your eyes
Fashioning a heavy music that is never free.

RAINY SEASON

HEAVY rains plod among the hills,
This late season has seen the gradual leave-taking of herons,
The deflected blossoms of the trees,
The sequence of a long and harrowing wind:
In these things a gradual motion precedes the people
Who begin to think of black days within houses,
And the waterbound forest, and rivers become too swift for boats,
And the island that will sink three inches,
And great blue thunderheads flagging the horizon.
Thus begins the cave of a nine-months rain
Into which these people hurry:
Then will the elements be alone,
With water falling, water underfoot on all the walks:
The earth belongs to who will walk among thick mists
Under dripping palms, over broken flowers,
Seeing if he will in the black marshes
The heads of Hydra and the Furies stir,
As shapely serpents pass among the trees.

— Panama, 1930

KATHLEEN TANKERSLEY YOUNG

THE AUTOMOBILE THAT WOULDN'T RUN

MAL ANDERSON sat beside his dog on the back seat of the automobile and played on his banjo. Signe sat in a rockingchair on the front porch of the Penobscot Hotel and listened to the music Mal made. It was midsummer and the weather was hot. A thunderstorm looked like it might come from the west. Occasionally a gust of wind did come from that direction, blowing the dust down the street in balls like little yellow balloons.

Mal had a job in the spool mill in summer but he did not like to work the year 'round. He went into the woods in winter and did not come out until spring. In the summer he liked to live in his shack with the dog and play his banjo when Signe sat on the hotel porch.

Mal strummed away on his banjo. Signe sat on the hotel porch rocking faster and faster.

plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plink!

Mal was a fine woodsman. In the spool mill, though, he was not such a good workman. He didn't like to work in the mill in the summertime. The mill made spools for electric wire. Mal should have been there now, checking the squares with his chewed-up blue pencil before they went through the turning machines. But Mal didn't like to work the year 'round.

Signe ran the Penobscot Hotel. It was a woodmen's hotel. The men used it when they came to town to spend the money they made up in the woods. Signe ran the hotel without any help.

plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plink!

Mal played his banjo for Signe. Neither of them ever spoke to the other. Mal might just as well have been born without the power of speech for all the use he made of it. You could talk to him for an hour and he would not say a word.

Signe went to the kitchen and brought back a bone for Mal's dog. Mal laid his banjo on the seat and opened the door. The dog jumped out after the bone and hopped in again. The dog curled up on the seat beside Mal and licked the bone. Mal played a tune on his banjo for Signe.

plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plink!

At five o'clock Signe went in the hotel to start supper. Mal laid his banjo on the seat and he and the dog got out and pushed the car up the street to the shed beside his shack. The automobile wouldn't run. One winter while Mal was up in the woods somebody broke into the shed and took the engine out. When Mal came back in the spring he got into the habit of pushing his automobile to the Penobscot Hotel where he played on his banjo for Signe. When Signe went into the hotel to cook supper Mal pushed his car back to the shed.

Mal pushed his automobile up the street to the shed. When he got to the shack Scott, his boss, was waiting for him. Mal didn't like Scott at all.

"Hello there, Mal," Scott, the boss, said. "I got some good news for you."

"I don't want to hear no news," Mal growled.

He knew that when Scott came to the shack he wanted to get some more work out of him. Nobody in the woods liked Scott.

"Get your stuff together, Mal. We're pushing up in the woods tomorrow morning at four o'clock."

Scott turned and left.

"To hell with you and the woods and all your spools," Mal shouted, slamming shut the shed door. The only way you could make Mal talk was to get him mad. But it was dangerous to make him angry. He had run half a dozen boss woodsmen out of the country. They went to Canada before Mal got a chance to hurt them.

Scott went down the street without looking back. Scott was a brave boss woodsman.

Mal went in his shack and slammed the door behind him. The dog curled up under the table waiting for supper.

Mal was known by everybody in the woods for several reasons. He was the best banjo player between Rangeley and Caribou, he could win all his fights with one fist and he was one of the half a dozen woodsmen in the whole country who could lay down a tree within six inches of a mark. He could stick two stakes in the ground three feet apart and lay a tree between them even on the windiest day. No matter how hard the wind blew the tree would fall exactly where Mal wanted it to fall. Or he could even place a stake where he wanted the tree to lay and drop the tree squarely on the head of the stake. He took his axe and chopped away. Give any two men a two-minute start on a tree with saws and axes and Mal would have his tree on the ground before the other two men. Mal was paid for eight days' labor while the other woodsmen were getting paid for six.

It was summertime now and Mal did not want to go into the woods again until winter. In summer he wanted to stay in town and play his banjo in front of the hotel. The spool mill had to have squares though, and Mal had to help get the logs out of the woods. It was a hell of a time of year to make a man work.

Mal went up the river with the crew the next morning and went to work the following day chopping down trees for squares. He left his dog and banjo at home.

They had been working in the woods three weeks when the men began to grumble. When they left town Scott said everybody would be out of the woods in two weeks. And at the end of the third week the men were getting mad. Scott had an idea he could keep them there a month or more. Long before the end of the month Scott had to watch himself closely. He had to watch himself to keep from getting hurt. For instance, a tree might fall on him.

"Let's sink the bastard in the river," one of the woodsmen suggested.

"Tie him to a tree and let the bob cats have him," another said. "You couldn't drown the bastard, he was born like a bullfrog."

"Mal'll catch him under a tree one of these days," Sanderson, the head teamster, said. "Let Mal have him."

Mal sat back on his haunches and said nothing.

Scott had sense enough to go to his shack every night after supper and not show himself until daylight. He could have been finished in five minutes in the dark, and he knew it too.

But at the end of five weeks Scott was in as good condition as he had ever been. He watched himself pretty closely while in the woods and he did not show himself after dark.

Two of the men got it into their heads one morning that they were going out of the woods, Scott or no Scott. They said nothing about it and got ready to slip out alone. Scott was in his shack washing up for dinner when they ran down to the river and pushed off in a canoe.

Scott missed them a minute later when everybody sat down for dinner. Calling Mal and another man he ran down to the river. The two men who had set their heads on going out of the woods were half a mile downstream paddling like mad. They were standing up in the canoe watching the submerged rocks ahead, while their arms and paddles waved like a windmill in a cyclone.

"Get a canoe, Mal, and go after those goddam Canucks and bring them back here to me. Take one of these men to help you." Scott swore and stomped the ground while Mal took his time about getting started.

Mal motioned to one of the men standing around them and they shoved off without a word. Mal was the biggest and strongest man in the camp. The other man was to help with the canoe.

The river lay in a straight stream for almost three miles. It was used for floating logs to the spool mill in the spring and summer. In winter it was frozen over and the logging teams drove on it going and coming to the camp.

Mal and the other woodsman struck out down the river after the two runaway men. In both canoes the men worked frantically with their paddles. Mal's canoe shot through the water at terrific speed. There was no doubt that he would overtake the other canoe within the next mile. He and the man behind him squatted on their knees where they could be closer to the water. Their canoe shot down the river leaving a foaming white wake spreading out to each shore behind them.

Scott swore and kicked at the rocks in the water.

"I'll break those goddam Canucks of wanting to run away from the job," Scott shouted, pushing the men away from him with his elbow.

The two canoes looked to be only a dozen lengths apart now. The leading canoe was about a mile and a quarter downstream. Mal's canoe closed up on it with every powerful stroke of his blade in the water. The woodsmen crowded down to the edge of the water, waiting to see Mal overtake the other canoe. What he would probably do when he got his hands on the men would be to hold their heads under the water until they were nearly drowned and then haul them into his canoe. When he brought them back to Scott, Scott would take all the fight out of them with the work he had already planned for them.

Mal's canoe closed up on the one ahead. The men in the canoe were still paddling with all their might, but Mal was stroking faster and harder.

The next instant the two canoes were breast and breast, only a boat length apart. And then before anybody could see what had happened Mal had passed them and the first canoe was already a length behind.

"The goddam son of a bloody bitch," Scott swore, slamming his hat against a tree until it was ripped into ribbons. He was so mad he could not say what he wanted to. Mal had double-crossed him. He shouted at the men and kicked at his torn hat on the ground. "The goddam son of a bloody bitch," he shouted from the depths of his powerful lungs.

Both canoes were all but out of sight by now. One canoe was half a mile ahead of the other.

Scott ordered the men back to the woods. After they had gone he walked slowly up the hillside to camp. Mal Anderson had put one over on him.

Mal got home the next afternoon and opened the door of his shack. His dog was sleeping on the back seat of the automobile. Mal made a fire in the stove and cooked something for the dog and himself to eat.

After they had finished eating Mal got his banjo and pushed the car out of the shed and down the street to the

Penobscot Hotel. Signe was sitting on the front porch rocking in her chair. When she saw Mal coming down the street with the automobile she leaned back in her chair and rocked faster and faster.

Mal pushed the car down the street and stopped it in front of Signe's hotel. Mal opened the door to the back seat and he and the dog climbed in and sat down. He slammed shut the door and picked up his banjo. Then he began to play a tune for Signe.

The dog curled up and went to sleep. Mal strummed away on the banjo.

plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plink!

Signe rocked back and forth, smiling out into the street where Mal sat in his car playing his banjo.

Mal settled down and propped his feet against the driver's seat. Signe went into the hotel a minute and came back with a bone in her hand. Mal opened the door and the dog jumped out after the bone. He held the door open until the dog hopped in again. Signe sat down in the rockingchair and smiled out into the street. The dog lay down on the seat and began licking the bone. Mal slammed shut the door and picked up his banjo again.

plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plunk . . . plunkety plink!

The music Mal made floated to the porch of the Penobscot Hotel and up the street and down it.

ERSKINE CALDWELL

SONG IN QUIET WEATHER

THAT I should stay and look for him
The meadow lark decrees
With upward hint of cherubim,
Wings folded in the leaves.

Curled lies the cock upon the roof
Beneath the lenient sky;
Winds in the reeds avow no proof
Of storms upon the fly.

The goose-bone in the farmer's hand
Lies thin and dry; the bane
Of evil weather for his land
Hides in the withheld rain.

My road lies in the withered copse,
Where water lurks too deep:
These ghostly bushes train their hopes
Of bloom in dusty sleep.

SONG IN QUIET WEATHER

So does the farmer's lamp at night
   Humbly contain his prayer:
For peaceful plenty in the sight
   Of grain against the air;

For song of lark above his house,
   For heat, and then the shower;
For nourishment, long-loving spouse,
   And harvest in his hour.

Alas! the gloomy underbrush
   Has roots above the damp.
Alleluia! in this hush
   For thought of lark and lamp!

PAUL HORGAN

SOME PROBLEMS OF MUSICAL CRITICISM

I

THE more direct the symbols of an art (which means the further removed from words), the greater the tendency to consider them self-sufficient: thus, while few would contend the ultimacy of the symbol in a novel or drama, relatively many are so inclined when they consider poetry, even more with music — and few people are aware of the emotional significance of mathematics.

Music, conveyed by extremely subtle symbols (which appear to be abstract only if we judge them by the uncritical reality of words and external things), yet obviously communicating emotional experience, has been particularly elusive: those who are overwhelmed by its emotive force generally confuse their own unrestrained impressions with the music; those who react to its idiomatic and formal content, are satisfied with "absolute music" and abstract discussion of musical form, the relative values of harmony and counterpoint etc. When he approaches the emotional qualities of music the aesthete betrays appalling incapacity for verbalization (assuming his musical experience to be of an emotional nature — which his words would indicate): "The third movement opens with a lovely theme for the cellos in five fourth time, followed by a profound rumble in the bass-viols. This theme is of such ravishing beauty that one listens to it spellbound. Here is all the grandeur of Tchaikowsky's soul," etc., etc. The implied inadequacy of words, I think, accounts much for "Art for Art's sake" doctrines; but one should not forget that sheer opacity, barren of musical experience, may also produce such verbiage. However that may be, if words are to be used for critical purposes, one may at least demand that they be used critically.

The problem of musical criticism is the correlation of musical symbols with the psychological attitudes communicated by music. In this way, we may approach the general emotive significance of these symbols and acquire, in music, the musical equivalents of verbal references in a poem.

With literature music shares the power (as do all the arts) of evoking emotional states of a formalized nature. But in literature the emotion is always relevant to a situation which the reader may readily identify with a situation of life, actual or imagined; so with painting: the references are always limited by this setting. So much of our emotional experience has been verbalized that, for the skilled reader, the broader meaning of a poem is always apparent. Since the language of criticism is the language of poetry, the critic is only at first remove from the poet, if, indeed he is not the same person. The critic of music must apprehend the experience from the musical symbols — which never have verbal equivalents.* He finds no words in the composition (except of the most general nature) to indicate the limits of attention and, since he must resort to words as his only means of communication, he must, or at least should, first translate the experience into verbal terms.

The link between the musical meaning and the verbal is

---

*It should be remembered throughout this discussion that the writer is not interested in verbal equivalents but in verbal *referents*. The meaning of the music is finally in the music itself, cf. Beethoven repeating his performance when he was asked what the music meant.

the psychological — by which is meant the complex of feelings, thoughts and emotions which are, or which may be considered to be, relevant to the matter at hand. When that is known we may employ the same verbal symbols as the literary critic, since the psychological states referred to will be similar. But the task of the literary critic [1] is easier: he works, after all, in a circle: words, psychological meaning, words. The musical critic goes, or should go, from music to psychological meaning to words.

The musical meaning includes the structure, both large and small, as indicated by the rhythmical movement to points of maximum intensity and the falling away, the harmonic progression which expedites such movement, the contrapuntal elements of which the movement may be composed, the melody by which the movement is inflected and the tone color by which it is qualified. It will be generally accepted, I think, that as I have indicated, the rhythmical movement is primary, and it might be pointed out in passing that the nature of a rhythm probably bears a definite relation to the psychological state of the generation which produced it. The predominantly serene rhythm of Bach's musical utterance may be considered a reflection of the quiet faith and security of a profoundly religious age. Compare this with the almost hysterical, short-breathed outbursts of rhythm in Tchaikowsky, still more in Stravinsky, composers of a period when faith and security are problems rather than assumptions. But such generalizations are more appropriate after the mechanism relating musical meaning to psychological attitude is established. For the present purpose it is necessary to stress rhythm not for any eternal, metaphysical principle, but simply because it is the strongest connecting link between verbal language and the musical.

---

[1] As a communicator of interpretations. In all other respects his difficulties are equivalent.

If there is any meaning in music, it must arise from the association of musical symbols with emotional states, and, since meaning implies the potentiality of common experience, there must be relevant musical symbols. If Watson's theory of thinking as subvocal language is accepted tentatively (I do so only as a matter of expedience), then the music* of our thinking and feeling is the *way* we say these things subvocally; the music of anger, for example, is the *way* we say the angry words, which part of each phrase we stress, which phrase we stress, the speed of the saying, the separation or slurring of words, the inflection of our voice, the thickness or thinness of its color. Poetry is more musical than prose in part because it suggests more the manner of the saying. The adept in musical communication can convey, in the symbols of musical notation, the manner of his thinking and feeling. It is not to be inferred from this that music is secondary to words. Music is language, i.e., a set of symbols adapted to the direct communication of experience. One is forced to use verbal analogy because the problem is, essentially, the approach of music through words.

The criteria of value in composition and performance follow readily. When the connection between the musical meaning and the psychological is apparent, the same standards of authenticity of experience, degree of organization, adequacy of communication, as apply in literary criticism [2] may be applied to musical composition. In the criticism of performance, the degree of sensitiveness to the composer's experience and flexible adaptability of technique (the major element in the communication of this sensitive comprehension) are primary considerations. These latter criteria demand of the performer all the essential qualities of the music critic which have been mentioned — but not necessarily the faculty of verbalization — perhaps preferably not so.

---

*That part of music with which we are concerned here, i.e. the psychological referents.

[2] I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism.*

One characteristic of music, distinct from the other arts and particularly literature, is its ability to communicate extremely complex psychological states.[3] This is due to its freedom from verbal or pictorial reference. It, in a way, compensates for the greater difficulty of its apprehension. The inchoateness of our personal experience is familiar enough, but the poet would be prevented from communicating this more completely (assuming that he should want to) by, among other things, the coherence applied to words in the business of living, the painter by the coherence of visual symbols in nature. Modern movements in painting and literature recall the words of Pater (although probably not in the way Pater meant them) that music is the art to which all other arts aspire.

In the light of this complexity the illustration of anger and the music of anger is, necessarily, a simplification of the case. No phrase of music is confined to an attitude expressible in one word.[4] Because of this complexity, and the difficulty of its communication in words (which is the only medium generally available to the critic), because the possibility of error is correspondingly great, the need for critics to commit themselves about the music they are criticizing is extremely urgent. Musical criticism requires a sensibility as articulate in words as it is sensitive to music, adequate training in both idioms, the ability to refer to a definite musical passage whatever attitudes of thinking and feeling that passage has evoked. Until something specific has been said one cannot accept it or refute it. At present, ordinary discussion of musical value involves an assumption of common experience which the facts of the case do not justify.[5] Until we commit ourselves on our musical experiences we can never be quite sure of what the other fellow is talking about. The creative musician may refer us to his composition for his meaning, the interpretative to his performance. The critic has only his writing to show. It is a little presumptuous of him to expect us to assume and accept his experience simply because his judgment of value implies one. Since he has taken words for his medium, he must communicate his experience in that medium. That this is extremely difficult of attainment is no excuse for its neglect, that it may lead to fantastical excesses should cause us to condemn those excesses in the practise, not the practise itself. The evasion of this task is the "impasse" of musical criticism.

---

[3] It is a tendency among analytical critics to refer to simple states as though they existed isolated from the rest of experience. It should be remembered that although one may speak of an impulse, no one has ever seen one or experienced one in isolation: we also speak of atoms.

[4] The same holds true in literature, but to a lesser degree — because the artist has used the same symbols as the critic.

II

The critical interpretation of music presumes a precise knowledge of its nature, what may be legitimately expected of it and what may not, wherein it attempts to transcend its limitations and the inadequacy of such attempts; as a peculiar idiom its peculiarities and the direction of their natural expansion and development. A sense of the relevancy and legitimacy of his reactions should censor the writings of the music critic: his creative impulse, which too often accounts for critical aberration, should discern the appropriate field for its activity. Familiar transgressions indicate plainly enough that the presuppositions of musical criticism are too often only polite assumptions.

---

[5] This does not mean that the musical reviewer must first commit himself about the meaning of the music in each review. It does imply, however, that he should have interpreted the music, in musical symbols if he was able to, or in verbal ones. The nature of his judgments will always show whether he has done this or not. There is a distinction to be drawn between musical reviewing and musical criticism; one is, essentially, judgment; the other, just as essentially, anatomy of judgment.

The two poles of interpretative attitude are the search for the program and the search for the absolute. The error of the first should be apparent but the general decrial of the practise is no assurance that it is; the horror of the musical purist may account for that. The attitude of absolutism is not to be summarily dispensed with. It is deep-rooted in the beliefs of primitive Christianity: man is conceived in sin and must of necessity lead a life of sin (more or less); therefore any art which relates to this life is prima facie impure. Music, free of all tangible reference to this life, has been on a par with the paintings of angels. That the angels had the faces of men was ignored, that the music had the stamp of man's hand, also. Actually, if it could assure itself of comprehension, the church should chant mathematical equations, the more complicated the better. Music (assuming that its natural emotiveness is not exploited) is only a second choice, a kind of vulgarized mathematics; but the only thing absolute about it is its mathematics — which is the showing of relationships. However, the mathematician shows relationships among things which are abstract to start with, i.e., numerical quantities; the musician shows the relationship and consequent compatibility of human attitudes which, if they are said to be abstract at all, represent a unique type of abstraction. The emotion involved in the discernment of relationship independent of the relata is the emotion of "absolute music," but that too is the emotion of mathematics. It is also probably what Clive Bell meant by "aesthetic emotion" just as the mathematics of art is what he meant by "significant form." Since the establishment of relationships is no mean part of musical function, the search for the absolute here is obviously justified. But it should be remembered that it is only part of the story. In pure mathematics it is everything; in music the reaction of the things related with the relationship is alone sufficient. Anything else is, by the nature of music, incomplete, however pure.

Program music, as we generally understand it, becomes such when a program is affixed to music. There is no intrinsic program — if the term is used in its ordinary sense. Yet, in a very important sense all music has a program and agreement concerning its nature, or articulate disagreement, will avoid much futile discussion. The question is not: is there a program? but rather, what *kind* of program is there? One is aware of a program simply because the structural elements of music convey definite emotional attitudes which are verifiable by their universality, because, for example, after finding, in the opening motive of the Beethoven String Quartet in F Major, Opus 135, a mood predominantly questioning, concerning this same motive, I discovered: "There is a sense of questioning in this theme," by de Marliave, and by Theodore Helm, "Das ganze harmonisierte Hauptmotiv hat etwas Fragendes."

Certainly musical symbols cannot communicate concrete objects:[6] that is only possible by representation, pictorial as with the primitives, or by convention, verbal, as with ourselves. There is no real connection between the term, chair, and the chair itself; we have simply equated word and object. Since we have no such conventions in music, such communication is impossible.[7] Of course music may suggest some physical phenomena by imitating their sound, just as certain onomatopoetic words derive their sense from the imitation of natural sounds. But this is an extremely limited device and it is significant that it is only infrequently resorted to by the serious composer — which is not to question its legitimacy but its relative importance.

---

[6] The communication of specific activities, for the same reasons, is subject to the same limitations, only there is, potentially, a more literal symbolization since there are direct equivalents of rhythm, tempo, intensity, complexity and duration.

What the composer can communicate is the way he reacts to things. But, strangely enough, in the process of communication the thing itself is lost: it is also a process of universalization. Let us say that a chair stimulates him to an attitude of rapture for its contours and balance of form, with a feeling of luxuriance in the contemplation of sitting on it. As sensitive listeners to the music which these reactions have produced we may apprehend the rapture, the balance and the feeling of luxuriance. We should let the reference go at that, tentatively, but one might presumably insist on clothing these attitudes in concrete particulars — and then come upon the astonishing revelation that the rapture is the composer's in contemplating the perfect symmetry of a beautiful woman and the feeling of luxuriance the visioned embracing of her body. He might then find an inhibited sex life in the composer's biography and, behold! everything is accounted for, whereas the attitudes account for everything just as well, perhaps better, and the inhibited sex life is just as relevant to them as to the woman. There is a dreamlike fluidity of physical reality in the composer's mind. His material, when it has to do with objects at all, is the attitudes conditioned by objects and not the objects themselves. Effectual operation of his creative mechanism forbids preoccupation with things. It also forbids preoccupation with complex spiritual abstractions such as "heroism" and the "noble" and the "highest morality." These words may, in the composer's mind as symbolic stimulants, serve to focus his attention on the relevant musical attitudes to be crystallized, but ultimately, whatever meaning they may have for him is in the music he produces under their stimulus and it is there that his meaning is to be sought. It is the great error of such critics as Huneker, Rolland, Rosenfeld and others to make the musical exposition secondary to the word. As writers and philosophers these words have a primary meaning for them which, whatever we may think of it, is to be found in their writing. It is only fair to look in the composer's music for his. The critic should announce complex verbal abstractions only as they may be synthesized from the related mass of particular attitudes communicated in the music. Otherwise what a composer says in words should be stated as a biographical fact and be allowed to speak for itself. Any other method makes the composer the critic's mouthpiece. One feels, for example, that ultimately Beethoven was a great fellow because he understood Romain Rolland so well.

---

[7] One has only to ask himself honestly how much of the goldfish would Debussy's "Poissons d'Or" suggest without the title to realize the truth of this statement. The title is justifiable, not because it represents the essence of the music, but because it helps the music by limiting the field of reference. Since Debussy's apparent desire is to communicate the musical attitudes conditioned by his observation of goldfish, and since he feels that consciousness of goldfish is essential to the experience, it is his privilege to use a title which insures it. This does not mean, as so many people think, that the composer here is trying to give the musical picture of goldfish — even if the composer himself thought so. And although there is little in the music to suggest the goldfish without the title, its relative correctness may be verified by conceiving the congruence of such a title as "La Mer" with the same composition. It is as if all the qualities of an experience in the musical conception of an object are of adjectival nature, so that they will fit some objects and not others, without being, in themselves, sufficient to identify the object.

The substance of music is the attitudes produced by the composer's exposure to persons, things, events and ideas, and to music itself. Because, in the process of composition, these particulars are lost, the attitudes alone remaining, it is a temptation of the listener to substitute his own particulars in his effort to comprehend the music. This is altogether justifiable as a bridge connecting two sets of experiences, but, as the meaning of the music, it is altogether fallacious. The peculiarly generalized human attitudes of which music is made and the capacity for organization are all the composer and his audience have in common. We teach the child that two and two are four by showing him two and two wooden splints, or marbles, or whatever is handy: it would hardly do to teach the grown-up boy calculus that way. He has outgrown the counting-on-finger stage long before. There is a strange kind of abstraction in music (if it is abstraction): its elements must be apprehended personally if they are to be apprehended at all; yet the minutiae of specific personal experience must be read into them if we would find them there. Music is the common ground of essence and particular: itself it is neither. That perhaps is why it is so fertile a source of human understanding and so sensitive a medium of human expression. It has all the precision of the isolated experience divorced from all the data required to establish its factual origin.

HERBERT S. SCHWARTZ

THEATRE CHRONICLE

V. E. MEYERHOLD AND HIS THEATRE

Meyerhold is in many respects the Picasso of the theatre, versatile, inventive, extraordinarily gifted. Like Picasso he is a restless spirit forever absorbed in experimenting with new possibilities and extending the scope of his medium. Like Picasso he has an uncanny skill in conveying his ideas with great resourcefulness and in clothing them in appropriate form. And if he finds that any of his achievements is no longer suited to the need of the moment he will not hesitate to abandon it regardless of the labor it may have cost him or the acclaim it has received. While others will probably take it up and build a reputation on it, Meyerhold will have gone on to other discoveries, sometimes finding himself in opposition to his earlier comrades in battle or to an entire movement of which he may have been the founder. One might write a book on "Picasso or the Art of Our Time," showing how Picasso touches at some point every important phase of art in the last thirty years. In the same way one could write on "Meyerhold or the Theatre of Our Time," proving the same thing for Meyerhold's own field. Of course there are differences, the chief of these being Meyerhold's stress upon the social factor. But even here one must remember that Picasso's work is full of explosive stuff more corrosive of tradition than appears on the surface.

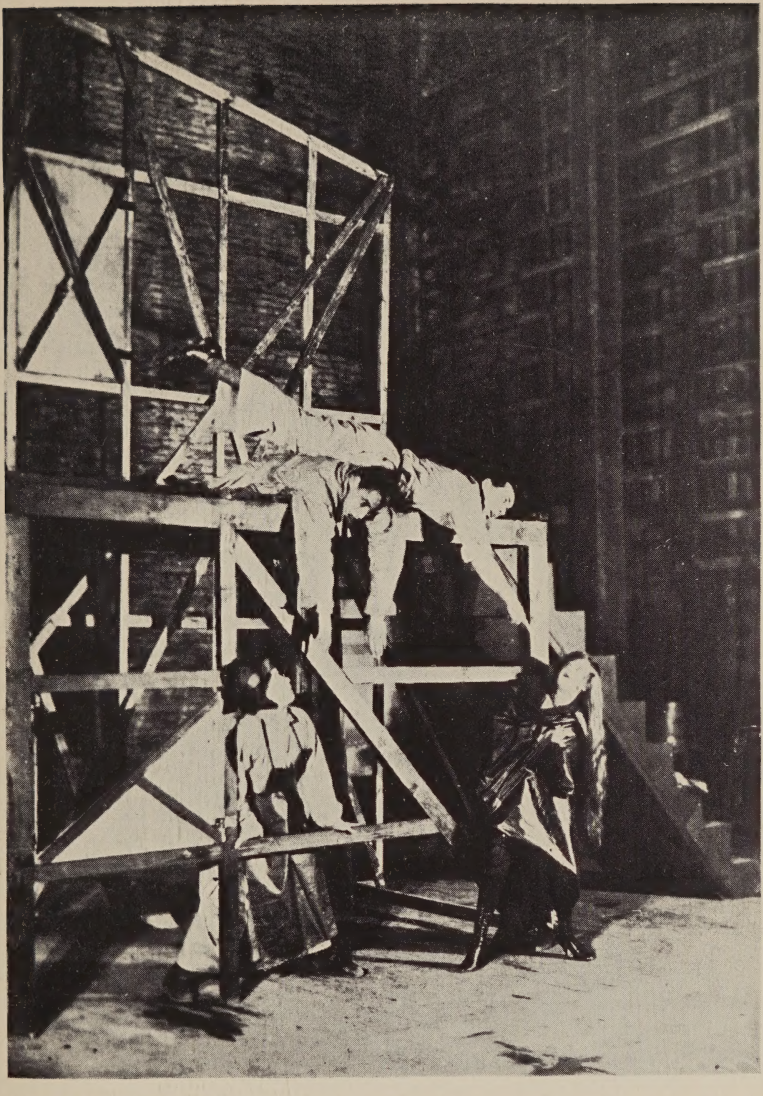
Meyerhold came to the Revolution with twenty years of battle for the reform of the theatre behind him. His career began with the establishment of Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre in 1898, when to bring a human being on the stage with a human psychology and in a true environment was a revolutionary innovation. Contrary, however, to Stanislavsky, who regardless of war, revolution, famine, imperturbably continued to perfect the same system of uncompromising actualism, Meyerhold has passed far beyond it, creating the "conventional" stage, reforming the Opera, reviving the interest in Commedia dell' Arte and the antique theatre. He assigned a new rôle to the scenic designer, attracted the best Russian artists to the theatre, wrote many theoretic disquisitions of great keenness. A seismographic quality in his temperament made him keenly susceptible to all social fluctuations and not only brought him to the revolution but also prevented him from remaining static, as was the case with so many others, and instead made him evolve and grow together with it.

The Russian (October) Revolution contemplated the most stupendous transformation in history, both cultural and social, and was, therefore, inevitably bound to affect the arts, particularly the theatre. The old Russian theatre had been created by the liberal, power-conscious bourgeoisie and could not but reflect its strong interest in reality, its aggressive individualism tempered by a charitable disposition towards its fellow men on a lower social plane. The "intelligentsia," wavering between the upper and the lower classes in constant insecurity, added to the theatre a note of despondency and a strain of nostalgic self-questioning. With the old social order scrapped, the theatre was now nationalized and the revolution brought to it a new audience of insurgent masses with a new psychology and new interests, unsusceptible to the twilight sleep of the old spiritual and moral problems. Fighting fiercely for survival, this audience required something that would hearten it; the combustible material of which it was made up lacked only a spark to set it afire. Many artists could not or would not relinquish their old habits and so were either indifferent or hostile to the new order. A few, however, especially the modernists, accepted it enthusiastically. Like Mayakovsky in poetry and Tatlin in art, Meyerhold identified himself with it and inaugurated the "theatrical October" in emulation of the "political October." He did it in the manner he felt most qualified, that is, by theatrical means. Hence, however informed with social message his productions may be, they are all so many stones in the building of a new theatrical art, a new technique of acting, staging, lighting, etc. During the period of the civil war Meyerhold drifted for a time, served in the Theatrical Section of the Educational Commissariat, was imprisoned by the Whites, rescued by the Reds, and finally settled in Moscow in 1920, where he has since given a series of productions of unparalleled variety, novelty and significance which had a far-reaching influence on every important theatre in Russia and on many theatres outside, including America.

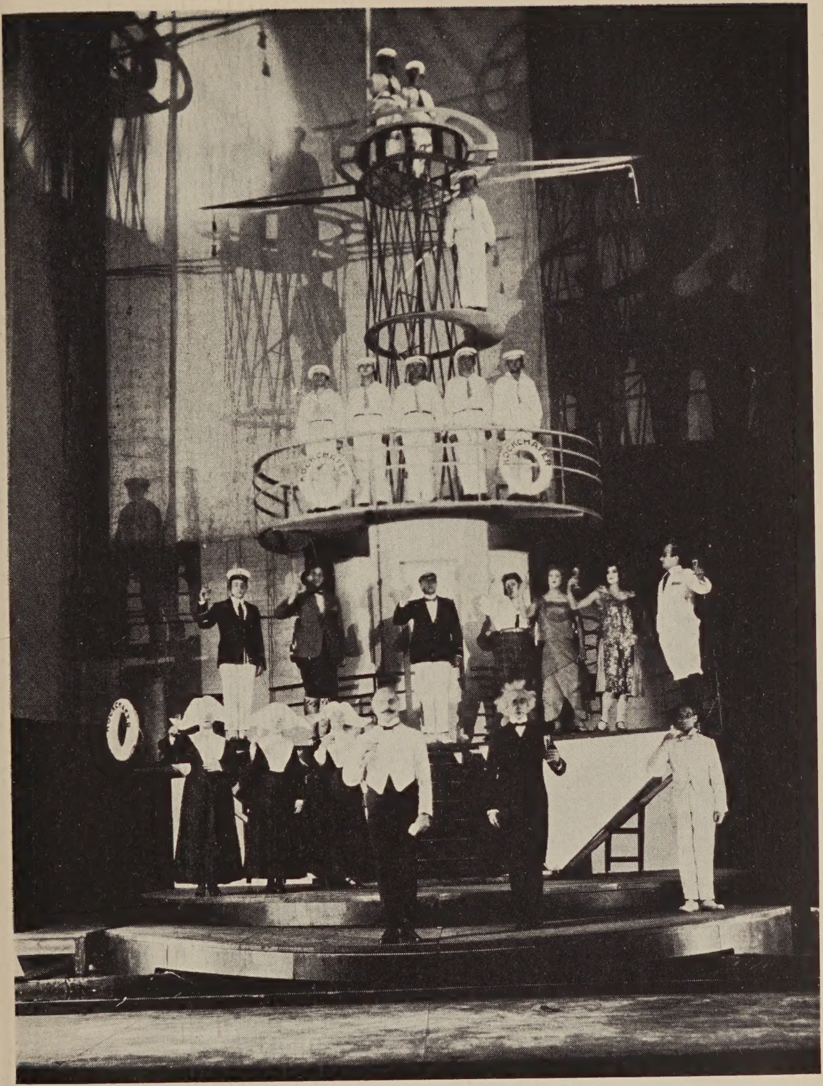
With the very first production, *The Dawn* by Verhaeren (1920), Meyerhold became a storm center of violent antagonisms, chiefly because he believed that revolutionary content required revolutionary form. The settings were bold, geometric, posteresque; the acting was raw, agitational; no curtain was used and the stage projected into the auditorium with actors, sailors and soldiers moving from the one to the other. The policy of changing the author's text for social or technical reasons was established. In fact, Mayakovsky, the author of the next play, *Mystery Bouffe* (1921), produced in celebration of May 1st, gave full sanction to this policy.

The clearest expression of Meyerhold's early period came with Crommelynck's *Cocu Magnifique* (1922), a production subsequently of the widest influence, which had for its first effect a veritable ideologic war. The theatre is a faithful chronicler of social trends even in times of peace, however much it may drift into "pure art" or "pure entertainment." In times of social crises like war or revolution it throws popular passions, prejudices and ideals into crude relief. Witness the recent war. The Russian theatre since the revolution even in its purely technical aspects furnishes an excellent interpretation of contemporary social currents and counter currents. Thus while the academicians continued to flounder in prewar individualism the modernists stressed the obvious parallel between the political and artistic revolutions and attempted to create new art forms as the Soviets had created new social institutions — forms whose monumental conception should correspond to the grandiose sweep of these institutions. This was exemplified in Tatlin's *Monument to the Third International*, in Mayakovsky's poem *One Hundred and Fifty Million*, in mass pageants and processions of tens and sometime hundreds of thousands. Neutral art was condemned. Art must serve the emancipated worker and since obviously nothing could better restore the destroyed property, compensate for the lost lives and build the new State than a busy industry and a healthy human race, there was widespread admiration for machinery and for "Americanization" of sport and industry. Meyerhold's "constructivism" and "bio-mechanics" were reflections of this. Constructivism as an art tendency sought to create a plastic equivalent of the machine age by emulating the order and precision of science, by utilizing the materials of industry (iron, concrete, glass, etc.), by cultivating an artisan's professional skill. Its insistence on utility was interpreted by some artists to mean greater economy and simplicity in art; by others as leading to "an irreconcilable war on art" in favor of industry. As adopted by Meyerhold for the uses of the theatre it meant the functional organization of the stage, that is, only as much of stage properties as are needed for the movement of the plot and the exhibition of the actor's art based on bio-mechanics. Bio-mechanics, in turn, meant the study of the physiologic and psychologic laws that govern the actor's body as a normally functioning mechanism so that its every gesture and movement might be employed with the greatest efficiency. Bio-mechanics demanded of each actor the careful observation of labor and sport so that he might become complete master of his body like an athlete, acrobat or worker. The actor in the realist theatre was interested chiefly in fine psychologic nuances, neglected his physique to the point of neurasthenia and often had recourse to stimulants; the new actor should restore the proper balance between mind and body.

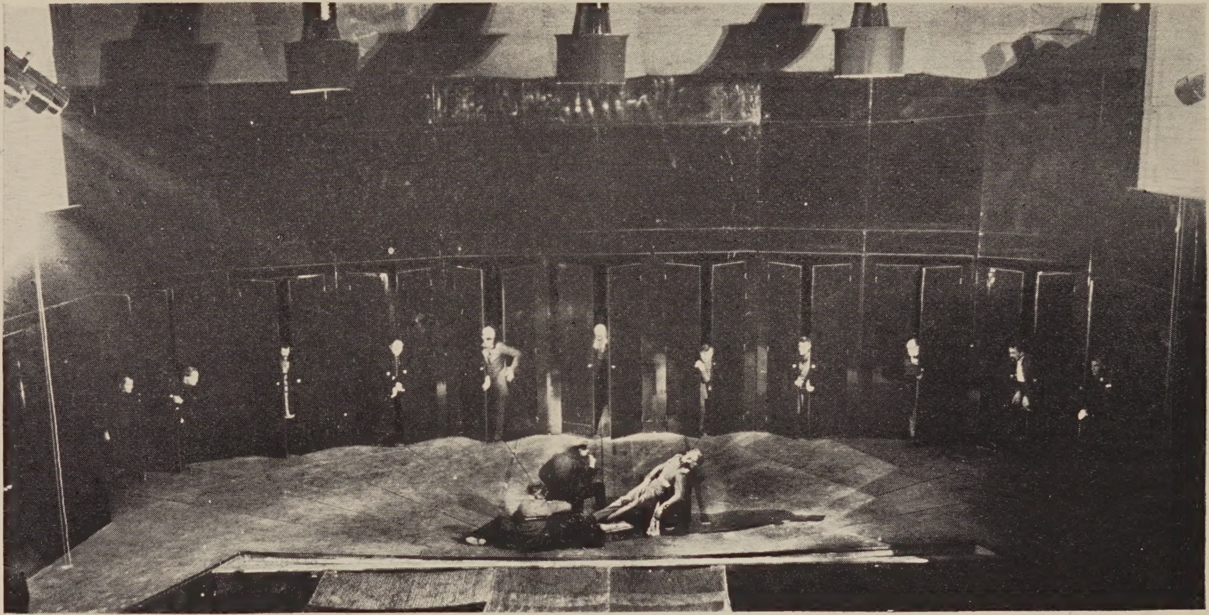
Meyerhold's *Cocu Magnifique* had scarcely any resemblance to the original French production at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre. The stage was bare. Curtain, proscenium arch, wings, foot lights, backdrop were removed. On the background of the bare wall of the building with its open brick work one could see a simple skeleton-like construction, a scaffolding designed by Popova, consisting of one large black wheel and two small ones, red and white, several platforms at various levels, revolving doors, stairs, ladders, chutes in square, triangular and rectangular shapes. The wheels moved fast or slowly according to the intensity of the action in the play. The stage director and even the stage hands were sometimes in evidence. The construction lacked unnecessary embellishment and was made up of usable parts alone; its levels were so arranged as to allow a tremendous amount of action up, down, sideways in every direction, concentrated in the smallest amount of space and with the least expenditure of energy. Since the construction was made of working parts only, the costumes of the actors were conceived in the same manner and designed especially for stage use — plain overalls of blue denim, alike for all actors, a sort of uniform to dis-



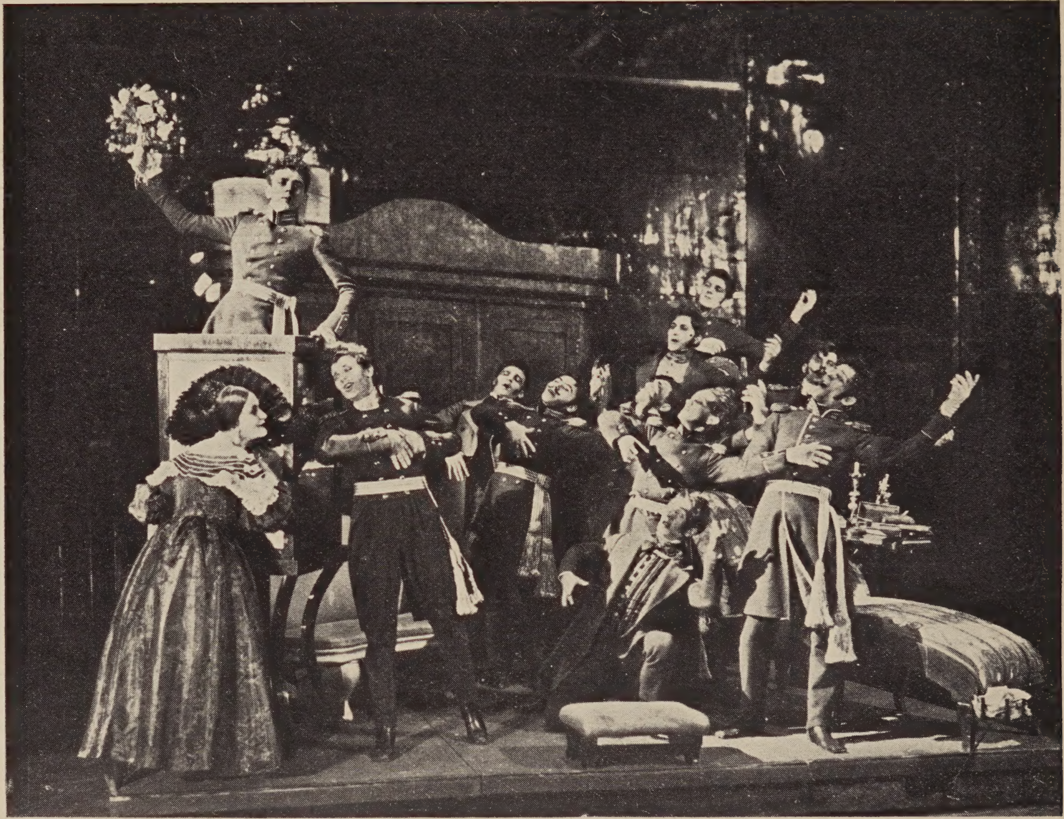
The Magnificent Cuckold Crommelynck



Roar China S. Tretyakov



The Inspector General N. Gogol



The Inspector General N. Gogol

tinguish the actor in the exercise of his profession as one distinguishes the baker, the aviator, the miner. The actors were without make-up; their speech was not the speech of ordinary conversation but a kind of standardized, syncopated recitative carefully calculated in its vowel and consonant accents and in its syllabic and phrase measures. The entire action of the play proceeded by acrobatic movements of the actors up the ladders, down the chutes, through the doors and around the construction with leaps, somersaults, dance and march steps, with a zest, a rapidity and vitality that kept the audience in constant tension.

The public was scandalized, the critics were bewildered and raised a hue which sent mobs into the theatre. To the accusation that he was breaking all theatrical traditions Meyerhold retorted that he was deliberately destroying certain pre-war traditions of the bourgeois stage only to draw upon older traditions of greater theatrical and social significance and therefore more appropriate to the present age. The bourgeois theatre with its static and painted scenery intended for passive contemplation and enjoyment is a legacy from the individualism of the Renaissance; its drama of individual passions and problems and the atmosphere of supersensitive nuances in which its actors moved, can only have the effect of brakes during the period of revolution. Meyerhold wanted a theatre that could energize the people and arouse them to action. To this he found the best precedent in the Mediaeval theatres of Italy, Spain, England; in old Japan and China, whose actors had been marvelous showmen, acrobats, jugglers, clowns, buffoons, entertainers with a healthy sense of the grotesque and the ridiculous. To learn a lesson from these healthy traditions without copying them but in order to turn them to account in the light of contemporary knowledge and needs, in the light of the lessons from factory and laboratory, was Meyerhold's aim.

The next productions developed and perfected the methods of *Cocu Magnifique*. *The Death of Tarelkin* by Sookhovo-Kobylin (1922) was the first of a series of Russian classical comedies which Meyerhold undertook to show in a new interpretation. *The Earth Rebellious*, rewritten by Tretyakov from Martinet's *La Nuit* (1923), was an echo of the abortive uprisings in Western Europe. Among the several innovations was a cinema screen (later to assume such prominence in the Piscator Theatre) used for projecting slogans and pictures and for indicating changes of episodes instead of a curtain.

The Forest by A. N. Ostrovsky (1924) opened a new phase in the Meyerhold theatre. If *The Dawn* and *Mystery Bouffe* constituted a period of preparation, of breaking down old forms no longer vital, of seeking after new forms that would bring the theatre closer to life, that would weld the people in mass action; if *Cocu Magnifique*, *The Death of Tarelkin*, *The Earth Rebellious* represented the period of embattled constructivism seeking to demonstrate the supreme need of a healthy body and an industrialized state, *The Forest* begins a period of Neo-Realism, not a realism of *trompe l'oeil* but one which utilizes constructivism and bio-mechanism, which simplifies, eliminates, organizes, to arrive at verity without being a slave to verisimilitude. No production of Meyerhold passed without a skirmish; *The Forest* plunged him once more into a war. This was the breath of life to him. At the outbreak of the revolution while some of his distinguished academic colleagues threatened to stop playing if the Soviet authorities should appear in the theatre (they had raised no objection when obliged to play before the Czar previously), Meyerhold lent the whole weight of his prestige to support the new State, though he later met with a certain opposition from the very source he supported, for failing to follow the manner of the hostile academicians. Meyerhold was, therefore, no novice in fighting ideologic battles. His new change was no whim or accident; it was a new orientation required by new circumstances. His earlier productions were done in bold color, loud speech and rough outline, so as to attract the attention of people deafened by the clatter of the civil war. However, since the introduction of NEP (New Economic Policy) in 1921 great changes have taken place in the social and economic life of the country. The permanent insurgency of the first years has given way to a slow process of reconstruction, while some concessions made to anti-social elements led to their temporary strengthening and created anew the problem of fighting and controlling them. Accordingly, *The Forest* is at once a warning against the dangers lurking in this new situation and a contemporary interpretation of a classic.

The Forest was changed from the original five acts into thirty-three episodes. Certain parts were cut, certain scenes were shifted out of the order given by the author for the purpose of making the satire more striking and keen than the censor would have permitted in Ostrovsky's own time. The elements of buffoonery and grotesquery were carried throughout in the delineation of the degenerate nobility, the petty merchants and their entourage. The leading lady's lewdness was emphasized by her burning red wig and sentimental whining voice, the unctuous priest had a gold wig and beard, a young sap wore green hair, etc. Only the characters that are recommended to our sympathy — a servant maid for example — were shown in more normal guise. A very effective way of accentuating character was by "play with objects." Every person was shown in association with some object characteristic of him. During the performance something was always being done; shaving, cleaning the rifle, hanging laundry, swinging around the maypole, exercising on the trapeze, playing the accordion. This popular instrument was skilfully used to lend a folk rhythm to some episodes in the play. The settings by V. Fedorov included no backdrop or painted scenery but consisted of a simple, hanging, bridge-like, winding road, rising from the foreground to the back, on an incline, to a height exceeding the human figure. Meyerhold employed a method analogous to cubism. The cubists sometimes contrast the painted surface of their canvases by the addition of materials different in physical property, like newspaper, sand, sawdust. The contrast between the real and the artificial produces a striking effect. Similarly, Meyerhold had actual fruit, kitchen utensils, living pigeons in bold juxtaposition with the purely conventional settings and costumes.

The three plays which followed, though all deserving of the closest study, did not quite approach *The Forest* in importance. Trust D. E. (*Destruction of Europe*, 1924) which treated of "the final conflict," introduced ingenious settings, flat portable wooden screens equipped with self-lighting apparatus and supported on casters, easily moved around and arranged into a café, a street, etc., by the addition of some simple object like a lantern or poster. *Teacher Bubus* by A. Faiko (1925), a comedy exposing the trials of a muddle-headed intellectual, proceeded under musical accompaniment furnished by a pianist seated in a niche facing the audience just above the actors. Acting was enriched by "pre-play," subtle pantomime and gesture characterizing a person before he even speaks. *The Mandate* by N. Erdman (1925), which tells the story of internal émigrés having a nostalgia for old times, is one of the better contemporary plays, clever in dialogue and keen in satire.

Roar China by the poet S. Tretyakov (1926) was directed in great part by V. Fedorov under supervision of Meyerhold, who was then absorbed in the next play, *Revisor*. *Roar China* depicts the growing self-consciousness of the Chinese masses and their efforts at emancipation from the foreign yoke. The entire population of a Chinese city is brutually terrorized by an English cruiser because one Chinese boatman is falsely accused of killing an American. Under the savage bullying of their self-righteous exploiters, the Chinese masses become aware of their own interests, acquire a human dignity, grope for a way out. The play is deliberately anti-imperialist in the portrayal of the pestiferous tourist, the unctuous missionary, the coquettish sister of mercy, the sensation seeking newspaper correspondent, the bullying officers. The acting resorts to "pre-play," "play with objects" and musical accompaniment. The settings (Fedorov) are in three sections, each for a set series of episodes: in the background a cruiser of five levels on which sailors keep watch and women drink and dance; in the middle ground a lake of real water with rowboats plying on it; in the foreground the beach where coolies congregate to settle their affairs and voice their grievances. The performance ends with the lowering of a screen carrying an appeal to support the Chinese revolution.

Revisor or *Inspector General* by N. Gogol which followed (1926) may be considered the master work of Meyerhold's revolutionary period and certainly one of the outstanding theatrical productions in Russia in the last decade. As in the *Death of Tarelkin* and in *The Forest*, Meyerhold continued his efforts to revamp and reinterpret the Russian classics. No sooner was *Revisor* shown than pandemonium broke loose. Meyerhold was attacked for profaning a classic and sacrificing social message to tricks of technique. In truth he did not intend to produce the work every intelligent Russian knows by heart only for the sake of keeping the audience to a familiar theme; this was done fittingly by the academic theatres. Meyerhold wanted to make patent an entirely new conception of

Revisor on the background of Gogol's complete literary heritage and to show the social implications of the play for our own time. Gogol was the castigator of a culture in senescence; Meyerhold is the prophet or, he would prefer to say, the engineer of a culture in its birth. In this production Meyerhold tried to show one from the standpoint of the other. *Revisor* pictures the dishonest bureaucracy of a small provincial town in uneasy expectation of an inspector sent to investigate their doings. A stranger is mistaken for him, is wined and dined and then leaves, not, however, before ridiculing his hosts in a letter to his friend. As the letter is intercepted and read to the dismay of the bureaucrats, news arrives announcing that the true Revisor is coming.

The censorship in Gogol's time was ruthless towards the slightest non-conformity. Gogol's accumulated gall would find escape either in eerie and fantastic tales or in satire upon places and people anonymous beyond recognition. Thus while he really meant to flay the high and mighty in *Revisor*, he had to choose a nameless townlet and a picayune hero. Meyerhold for the first time recreated Gogol in his true proportions. In addition to all known versions of *Revisor* he drew upon such capital works as "The Dead Souls." Furthermore, he invested the main characters with greater importance: the small town mayor assumed the wealth and power of a large city governor and his wife became a lax-mannered lady of high society.

The *Inspector General* was divided into fifteen episodes within which Meyerhold contrived to lay bare the base viciousness, the empty triviality, the fawning sycophancy, the animal lust of Gogol's grotesque but true world. The settings comprise fifteen doors of red, glossy lacquer arranged in a semi-circular line. Two small platforms of trapezoid shape are propelled during intermission — one at a time — by a motor over rails leading from the central doors. A third platform is lowered from the top. Upon the few square meters of these platforms episodes of the most elaborate composition are mounted with numerous actors and accessories. Music has now become such an integral part of the performance that Meyerhold calls it "musical realism." Choruses, solos, refrains; pauses, dialogue, replicas; even incidental noises of bottles, knives etc. are made part of one symphonic harmony. The acting, besides "pre-play" and "play with objects" borrows certain procedures from the cinema and the guignol. Thus the wife of the Revisor in the scene of her romantic day-dreaming is suddenly faced with the heroes of her imagination, scraping uniformed gallants. One even shoots himself for love of her. Their stiff wooden gestures, their leaping from closets, proclaim their kinship with the guignol, while their appearance in response to the woman's thought is clearly a cinematic convention.

Meyerhold's finale of the play is particularly original. In it Gogol had intended to pronounce the last judgment on the characters of Revisor. After the ball celebrating the passing of the storm comes the scene in which the intercepted letter from the adventurer is read, creating confusion and disappointment. Then like a thunderbolt the true Revisor is announced shortly to arrive. The gathering is stupefied and mute, remaining thus for a brief interval before the curtain falls. This "mute scene" as actually staged in Russian theatres gave in most cases the effect of an anti-climax with no more significance than a tableau. Meyerhold changed this entirely. We see a noisy crowd at the ball under powerful light of projectors. With the appearance of the postmaster and the intercepted letter the projectors are extinguished and the crowd huddles together in a pyramid listening to the letter as flickering candle light plays upon the men and women casting ominous shadows. Pause. Suddenly a galloping march sends the guests in a mad scramble over the stage into the auditorium and back to be engulfed in darkness and silence. Another pause; then a white screen with big black letters announcing the arrival of the Revisor slowly rises revealing the mute crowd as Gogol had described it, composed not of living beings at all, but of life-like, life-size marionettes in congealed attitudes, exactly resembling the characters of the play. The sudden realization of the substitution produces a ghastly effect on the audience. In this manner Meyerhold rings down the curtain on a world doomed to extinction.

Revisor was followed by the revival of another Russian classic, Griboyedov's *The Misfortune of Being Wise* (1927) and several contemporary plays.

Such, in brief, is the career of Meyerhold since the revolution. In this period his influence was the most powerful leaven in the transformation of the Russian theatre, on the right as well as on the left, reaching even the stronghold of Stanislavsky, extending to the theatres of the smaller nationalities, Jewish, Ukrainian, Tartar, passing the borders of Russia to reach Europe and America. What is the secret of his power? It is that Meyerhold possesses an active, probing intelligence which grasps the trend of events in their dynamic continuity and which is so dexterously competent as to find the appropriate theatrical language to interpret them. Meyerhold created a new theatre which registered with great sensitiveness the growth of a new world in creation. And because he sees the old world as decadent and tottering he subjects all its hypocrisy, dullness, futility and brutality to devastating satire. But his productions are not, therefore, unmitigated propaganda. Quite the contrary. They are highly entertaining spectacles offering great technical variety and parading a rich gallery of human types. It is precisely this theatre, so passionately devoted to an ideal, which is also more fecund in original technical inventiveness than any theatre concerned with pure art. And it would only be mental obtuseness to refuse the enjoyment of such mature art because it might happen to be the vehicle of a sound idea.

Louis Lozowick

Editor's note: It is announced that Meyerhold and a company of his actors will present a repertory of five or six plays in New York, starting in January. The productions, sponsored by Mr. Sidney Ross, will definitely include *Revisor* and probably *Cocu Magnifique*. The Theatre Guild plans to produce Meyerhold's version of *Roar China* independently some time during the winter.

MUSIC CHRONICLE

AARON COPLAND UP TO NOW

SOMEONE has said that Aaron Copland's musical ideas are like pennies shrewdly invested, rather than pearls advantageously set. This is not a fair statement, since it might imply that his works are mere skillful fabrications, which is far from the case. It would be more accurate to say that his architectural sense is in advance of his sense of style, which is still impure. For though it is true that his work as a whole is less often remarkable for distinction of material than for the power of construction and development displayed in presenting it, yet there are pearls, too, though these are not always in their perfect settings. In all questions of balancing tonalities, of negotiating transitions, of building up climaxes and preparing cadences, Copland generally shows a flawless ear and sense of proportion. Moreover, his faculty for discovering unexpected resources in his material, for presenting it under all sorts of different aspects, always alive and essentially musical, shows great imaginative force — amply compensating his lack of richness or abundance in initial ideas.

What is still lacking, on occasion, is a kind of integrity of sensibility, something to give more than a picturesque, or, in certain cases, a merely formal unity to his work. This lack is chiefly apparent in his more ambitiously personal works, such as the early Symphony for Organ and Orchestra, and in his latest composition, a Symphonic Ode. As a positive limitation it is perhaps least apparent in the Trio,[1] one of his ablest performances, foreshadowing in style certain characteristics of the Ode, but achieving greater unity in this respect than the latter. This is doubtless partly accounted for by the smaller scale on which the Trio was planned, but it is due also to a certain picturesqueness in its unity, almost as of a convincing character sketch. Eloquent and moving as certain passages are (especially the close), it impresses one rather as a prosperous excursion into a somewhat limited and special field, than as the full expression of a personality.

The same thing might be said of the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (1926), despite its great brilliance. If there was anything to be done on a symphonic plan, with the material and idiom of Jazz, it is certain that in this Concerto, Copland has triumphantly succeeded in doing it. The Finale is essentially Jazz, but in no sense is it dance music — which is less of a paradox than it might seem, since the whole problem was to find the appropriate and independent form for that material, to give it autonomy. This is precisely what Copland has done.

---

[1] "Vitebsk: Study on a Jewish Melody," for piano violin and 'cello — written about a year ago.

There is, however, one error in the way he builds up the climax of the first movement. After a series of four, effectively dovetailed entrances of a long expressive phrase for the strings, the four strands of melody become so matted that the ear can scarcely disentangle them. Supporting this is a heavy harmonic foundation, whose reiterated and uniform motion, sufficient to attract the ear as a kind of refuge from the intricacies of the upper structure, is nevertheless too heavy and mechanical to add much life to the movement of the whole. Were the bass's movements less perceptible, one would forget them, and strain to follow the complicated pattern unfolding itself above. Were they, on the other hand, freer and more alive, it might perhaps add further intricacies to what is intricate enough already, but at least it would be homogeneous with the rest: the ear might then have *nowhere* to go, but this would be preferable to sitting dully in a cellar.

Apart from this miscalculation (which might well be less apparent at a good performance than one realizes from knowing the score, or from having heard it badly played), the Concerto can hardly be found fault with. The zest which he manages to instill into certain rather jaded jazz *motifs*, the skillful disposition of the material, the humour and perfect timing of contrasts (not to mention the tense excitement of the close, with its alternating rhythmic bounds and sudden, quivering halts, as though immobilized by its very excess of energy) — save this work from being in any sense a *pastiche*, though one is aware of potentialities in Copland, not realized here, of achieving a more fruitfully personal style.

More ambitious, but in a way less successful than the Concerto — less of an accomplished *tour de force*, but richer in promises — is the Symphonic Ode.[2] In all preceding works, his essential personality has seemed fragmentary, not wholly liberated. I do not find it wholly so, even in the Ode, but the direction in which his style is tending is much clearer and more decisively individual than it has ever appeared before. The whole first section, — the marshalling of those ponderous blocks at the beginning, the vast inertia with which they shift and settle, reluctant to get under way, yet acquiring momentum inevitably, until they reach the point where they must break up and scatter into the feathery brightness of the *Allegro;* —

---

[2] This was to have been performed for the first time by the Boston Symphony last spring; but certain rhythmic passages had been noted in a way that was apparently too complicated, both for conductor and players, and so had to be noted differently. It is to be played in Boston this coming season.

in the breadth and gravity of this music one feels that Copland has at last brought to light an essence which is entirely his own.

There are one or two harmonic idiosyncrasies in this work, such as his constant use of an interval or chord of two widely spaced notes (a "tenth," to be exact), for which he has an untiring preference. It cannot be denied that certain of the uses he puts it to make one see something in this interval, in its color-value, that one never saw before. But at other times there seems to be no reason at all for his using it, except perhaps to be consistent; — though the recurrence of what is hardly more than a mannerism is surely not what gives a style consistency. Again, in a transitional passage leading up to the *Più Mosso Ancora* (which in turn bridges over to the *Allegro*), there is some unnecessarily disagreeable dissonance arising from the way the bass is written. While two horns are slowly covering a wide upward stretch in parallel straight lines, and the violins, an octave higher, embroider on these two lines, pointing and enhancing their upward movement, the bass, having only a small distance downward to cover in the same period, and being consequently in no hurry, dawdles and fumbles along, getting in everyone's way. One wishes Copland had found more profitable things for it to do with its spare time.

The first of these peculiarities of style — the repeated use of the same chord — can perhaps be attributed to a certain poverty of harmonic resource, which is noticeable in a good deal of his work, and is evinced also by his frequent use of *ostinati*. (It is possibly the basis of what Mr. Paul Rosenfeld refers to as Copland's "leanness.") The second peculiarity of style is of much smaller consequence. One cannot, on the strength of this one short passage, call Copland's way of writing careless, for there is, in the same work alone, far too much evidence to the contrary; for example, at the *Poco Più Mosso* not far from the beginning, where, over the calm reverberations of a figure deep in the bass (assigned to piano and harp), a muted trumpet, a clarinet, a flute and oboe, call and answer each other with different fragments of the theme — all in dark and mysteriously spacious tranquillity. There is a shift of key very near the beginning of this passage, so delicate as to be almost imperceptible in its passing, yet of itself enough to show that Copland is anything but insensible to the most subtle inflexions of musical language.

So far as his melodic style goes, in certain works previous to the Ode one had glimpses of it (in the Prelude of *Music for the Theatre* and in the *Lento Molto* for String Quartet), but hardly more. The theme of the Ode, and its first developments, show a marked advance in substantiality and strength of line over anything written before. While the long melody that runs through the first movement of the Concerto seems to arise out of an "atmosphere" or ambient mood of sultry lyricism; and the theme of the Finale of the Symphony for Organ and Orchestra seems groping in its contours, that of the Ode is entirely self-sufficient and definitive. One may, perhaps, find his presentation of it too obviously declamatory (full brasses flanked by heavy accents in the bass and high treble), but this does not prevent it from speaking for itself, as a line of powerful impulse and free flight.

He is again, melodically, at his best in the beginning of the slow middle section, where the initial phrase of the same theme, from having been at first stretched out to cover a wide span, is here reduced to its smallest compass (using the same notes). This procedure, together with the really genial harmonies that accompany it, give a reserved and recollected character to these measures — perhaps the finest in his entire work. But here again he allows us only a glimpse of what might be; for the style of this section as a whole is mixed and fragmentary. We are given the beginning of a line, of great sobriety and distinction, but in what follows one feels that Copland has become involved in "figures" and inventions. Attractive as these figures are, and ingenious as developments of the initial idea, they are somehow on a less serious, a more "atmospheric" and mood-engendered plane than that on which he started. Even where he gives the theme in slow syncopation to the english horn: the charming way he rounds off each phrase, once by an unexpected drop at the penultimate, the next time by a corresponding rise, and a floating, weaving, suspended repetition of the last two notes: though by all odds a "good moment," even this is not really in keeping with the beginning. Nor is the in itself beautifully written part later on, where the second period of the original theme, played by the violas, rises like a fragrant exhalation out of a rich fabric of lower voices; — nor where the violins subsequently take up the same phrase, on an almost too caressing change of key.

It is not through any lack of talent that he goes astray here. Considered apart from their context, these passages are all pleasing enough. It is rather, as I remarked at the beginning of this study, a unifying integrity of style which is lacking.

The last part of the Ode, or rather the recapitulation and expansion of the *Allegro*, may seem musically empty. The occasion, however, did not call for new material of importance. Its length will only seem excessive if one forgets the scale on which the piece started. Having opened in such a roundly declamatory, almost grandiloquent, manner, it was necessary to work up to that pitch again, and, at the close, to surpass it. The preparation of the final tonality, the last measures, where eight horns *fortissimo* stride upward till they reach a dizzy peak, — all this is realized in a masterly manner. Nor is there any actual weakening or falling off, in the rather barren slopes which precede this climax and build it up. One only regrets, perhaps, that he should have placed his peak at such a sensational height that all vegetation ceases long before we reach it. In other words, it is possible that the work as a whole would have gained in purity and concision of style through being reduced in scale.

In conclusion, it must be added that such detailed criticism as I have attempted on the work of a man of only thirty, the bulk and average merit of whose performance to date are so remarkable, should not be taken too seriously. The limitations one is conscious of are by no means necessarily inherent; nor can they, as I have said, be ascribed to want of talent; for of this he has already shown sufficient abundance to place him in the front rank of contemporary musicians.

THEODORE CHANLER

ART CHRONICLE

Museums Modern and Metropolitan

IN October the Museum of Modern Art will inaugurate its second winter. What will its policy be, and what place will it take in our life? Last winter many people felt tricked because, after opening with some of the grandest Cézannes, it then showed works of merely contemporary interest. They felt that the Museum should buy the best works of modern art and install them in a permanent collection, as a guide to our taste.

These objectors had probably not looked at the junk heaps that various collectors of the past fifty years selected as the best of their time; they had not considered the Thomy-Thierry in the Louvre, with its Ziems, or the Suasso Museum in Amsterdam, with its Israels, or our own Katherine Lorilard Wolfe Bequest in the Metropolitan Museum, with its "representative moderns" of 1870 — Cazin and Meissonier. Once the Museum of Modern Art starts such a permanent collection with which to excommunicate and canonize, its usefulness ends. Its function is not to judge, but to show us our time and leave us to judge. It should be the clearing house for our enthusiasms; it exists to give us our fill of folly, and follies must be fresh to stimulate.

For instance, we hear that prices have dropped for many contemporary painters in Paris. What will the dealers' next racket be? Will it be the English craze for Magnasco and the Bolognese, or the French revival of Delacroix? Or will it be fresh contemporary painters? — Masreel perhaps. Whatever it is, the Museum of Modern Art should show it to us and give us a chance to make up our minds about it. Besides dealers' rackets it should show us private enthusiasms that have not been aired enough for us to judge them, — it should show us posters and photographs. (We hear, by the way, that Atget is coming.) And are there interesting artists working in Australia, Japan, South Africa, Brooklyn?

All this is not said to criticize, but to defend the Museum of Modern Art against those who do not value its chic and pertinence, but condemn it for those very virtues. We think the directors of the Museum could not have been better chosen. They have an impresario's flair for springing the right surprise at the right instant, for releasing the early Burchfields this spring, for casting Seurat with Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin, for playing up Winslow Homer against Eakins, for making a side show of Paul Klee, with placarded arrows pointing the entrance. Each of their announcements was like a menu of fresh foods that we were eager to taste and browse on, or taste and spit out.

In ten years most of these enthusiasms will raise our hottest blushes, but what of that, if there is no permanent collection to fix our gawkiness as in some "fadograph of a yestern scene"? And perhaps we might have more grateful memories, like the men who were initiated to Cézanne in 1905 or so.

All this activity absolves the Metropolitan Museum of responsibility toward contemporary production and thereby points its path definitely toward the past. The Metropolitan shirks its duty when it exhibits Czechoslovak glass, or Arthur B. Davies, or Swedish rugs, or department store decorations. Its calling is for higher matters. It should follow the precedent of Burlington House, of Dr. Valentiner in Detroit and of its own great Spanish Exhibition. It should, in other words, tap the ancient treasures that lie hidden in private collections. Its Spanish Exhibition was not very well chosen (it included a couple of most dubious el Grecos) and it was hung any old way, and yet it was by all odds the outstanding artistic event of the winter in New York, for it brought together some unforgettable paintings, such as the el Greco *Agony in the Garden*, and the *Bullring* by Goya, or whoever. We came out with other eyes than those we had brought in, reconsidering Goya in the light of el Greco, and settling a whole new hierarchy in our heads. The Metropolitan should follow up its almost only triumph. It might hold a Byzantine Exhibition, an Exhibition of Ingres-David-Isabey-Houdon, and many more.

As it is, the Metropolitan scatters out little sops to everybody; to manufacturers, to decorators, to dabblers in "modernity," and so satisfies nobody. It should have the courage to confine itself to the past. Its task is in a way harder than that of the Museum of Modern Art, for it should judge the past, and select only what is still of interest. Works of art, like people, die; sometimes they come to life again (like el Greco) and sometimes not. A museum should exhibit only what is alive for its time. (For instance, the Barbizon and Hudson River painters are for the time being dead, and should be laid off in the vaults.) Has the Metropolitan the necessary nose for death? A glance into their forlorn halls of painting will convince anyone to the contrary. The Louvre itself is hardly more cluttered with rummage, and even the very Louvre has given up its Salon Carré, such as we still have at the head of the main stairs. The dispersal and absorption of the Havemeyer collection this autumn should be the signal for the entire rehanging of all the galleries of painting. Yet, will it be? Just how much can one expect from curators of painting who let Titians slip their hands because they are too cocksure and negligent to take an X-ray photograph? *Quis custodiet istos custodes?*

A. Hyatt Mayor

CORRESPONDENCE

CRITERIONISM

Mr. M. Belgion is possibly a *Criterion* product but his thought is not quite careful enough. The services of the *Criterion* shd. be justly appreciated. The *Criterion* has tried to establish, and in measure succeeded in establishing a medium for careful criticism as distinct from the slop that preceded it (Chestertonian decade in English journalism). Almost the sole use of a decent academic publication is that it gives the livelier writers something definite to object to. You can not rebel against a quagmire. At least there is no use trying to demolish a quagmire by artillery fire, however well directed.

English criticism in the period before Mr. Eliot assumed control of it, was an unqualified mess of inaccurate statements, of statements made without clear, and in most cases without honest, motive. The English disease was mush-headed stupidity; the American disease ignorance, as for example the almost incredible ignorance of Mr. S., the editor of the pretentious "*Atlantic*" (favored by timidity, as for example Miss Lowell's in her unwillingness to expose the indecent paucity of the editor's intellectual clothing). The two maladies required different medicine.

In Mr. Belgion's essay *God Is Mammon*[1] it appears to me that one or two inaccurate statements are due simply to lack of proper information. I mean that if he had read Confucius (not Bertie's or anybody else's views on Confucius) with a clear mind, he wd. not have made these remarks. Any ass or any propagandist can make remarks containing 70 or 60 per cent of probability. We are now fighting for the higher percentages of accuracy.

The *Criterion* has the limitations of its tendencies. In trying to rectify America my own method for the past twenty years has been that of heaving masses of fact into it, of heaving in whole authors whose donné wd. serve to prevent recurrence of certain inexactitudes, and in the presence of whom certain types of imbecile must supposedly be forced to shut off their prevailing yawps. In so doing I have perhaps showed a touching faith in the perceptive powers of my contemporaries. Mr. Eliot, surrounded by British suet, has not had any such confidence and has "relied" on, or tentatively employed, the method of increasingly guarded abstract statement; patient, O Castor and O Pollux how patient, explanation.

---

[1] Hound & Horn Vol. III, No. 3. April-June 1930.

The danger of the *Criterion* policy is that one can not indulge continually in a diet of dead crow without its tainting the breath. You can not spend *so much* of your time analyzing the imperfections of dead and moribund writing without some odour of the undertaker's establishment penetrating the pages of the review. The polite assumption, in England, is that the reader has read all the great works of literature and can therefore afford time for the inferior works. This is a false assumption, ignorance in England being almost as great as that in America. In England it is less noticeable because the stupidity has the greater salience.

The for the moment boomed and discussed Maritain is, I suppose, an enemy of the human race. No man who was not wd. rake up the topics of Luther, Calvin and Rousseau. I suspect Mr. Belgion of a touch of misanthropy when he introduces the names of Lippman and Gide. It is all very well to say that Mr. Belgion and Mr. Eliot and Mr. Arvin are acting as burial squad. We suspect them of having dug up the corpses for the sake of having a funeral.

The whole of, what shall we call it, "French Bloomsbury," has for ten years been engaged in digging up not the corpses of personalities but the corpses of ideas, for the sake of decorating the *chambres ardentes*. It is not that these ideas and mental attitudes are always absolutely without excuse; it is that they are unsuited to the present emergency, and that (oh yes, we know the little sophistication that is trumped up to meet this, but it don't work) not only are these playthings unsuited to the present job, but they will not stand in the presence of the best thought considered outside the limits of historic time, *i.e.* recorded thought from Thales and Confucius to Cocteau and Picabia.

There can be measure in most things. Gourmont advised us to go home and put up our shutters; but the ivory tower attitude was overdone. There were not enough active and alert fool-killers, and Europe fell into war. There is need for alertness but it has a proper scope and direction. It shd. be focused upon active and imminent perils. You can not simply omit notice of decomposition.

Ulysses is the one answer to and diagnosis of the *Daily Mail.* Before Joyce built that marvellous cloaca, the *Daily Mail* was a nameless horror pervading the air and sky, a mixture of inaccuracy, sentimentality, clichés, ideés recues, rhetoric, propaganda. Wyndham Lewis has more recently spent his energies in attacking contemporary imbecilities. Even if his revolutionary simpleton were as much a repudiation of dangers he had himself incurred as portrayal of external phenomena, it wd. be a serviceable figure. I take Lewis and Joyce as types of men making approvable attack on intolerable contemporary conditions. This is as far removed as Elysium from Tartarus from M. Gide diddling around with the question of somebody or other's being worried or peeved about some obsolete, finikin question of Christian conscience.

I take it (at least a recent work published in Paris tells me)[2] that I have done something toward bringing sound French writing into America. And I strongly object to watching the import of frippery that is likely to waste 5 or 10 years of American time. I remember some young gentlemen in London who, faced with Gaudier-Brzeska's sculpture, promptly took to collecting Victoriania, stuffed birds and blue glass. The whole kit and bilin' of the n.r.f. has shown a similar mentality (Gide, Valéry, etc.) in varying degrees, with minor variants.

If I were a Christian it strikes me that I shd. prefer an out and out Atheist or Deist to some chap who took up Christianity as if it were a new style of lace cuff and who thought the communion wafer was a species of aspirin tablet. Looking at history it appears to me that the unity of Christendom was lost when the Church lost confidence in its own dogma, no longer believing that meditation on truth wd. inevitably lead to agreement with the Church's teaching.

A more or less recent citation of Lenin wd. lead me to think that the "reds" are in a similar predicament. The page of Lenin (*New Masses* Oct., 1929) was cut off from its context and I doubt its being a complete statement of his position. No man who believes he is right will object to honest statement by his opponents; he will merely insist on their recognizing the facts and not faking conclusions.[3]

---

[2] Taupin's "Influence of French Symbolism on American Poetry," Paris, 1930 (to be reviewed in these pages shortly).

Historically, I believe that the Christian unity was lost because the high ecclesiasts had simply forgotten theology. They were no longer interested in the difference of substance and accident, and not sufficiently instructed to know when a given teaching was or was not heretical. After the split, the irreconcilable positions are defined in the correspondence between Leibniz and Bossuet. Passons.

I am against stopping to argue about free will and the immortality of the soul in the midst of an explosion or a shipwreck. With European civilization going to Hell and America not getting on with the work fast enough to have a bearable civilization ready to take on when Europe collapses, I am against frittering away so much time. It takes as much critical acumen to pick out the sound and living topics for discussion, to select the vital writers of the present, *i.e.* May, June, July, 1930, as it does to write elaborate estimates of the failures of 1890 and 1904. In fact it takes considerably more critical sense. If in many cases it permits less extended verbal manifestation, so much the worse for those who think verbal manifestation at relatively low intensity is the chief aim in life.

EZRA POUND

---

[3] Several *New Masses* writers seem to have forgotten that revolution is a means, not an end. One moves from somewhere to somewhere else, and a recognition of both localities can do no harm.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editors
THE HOUND & HORN
New York, N. Y.
Gentlemen:

In his essay entitled "The Definition of Humanism" (THE HOUND & HORN, July, 1930), Mr. Robert Shafer refers to an article of mine called "The Fallacy of Humanism," and proceeds to say: "Mr. Eliot liked this so well that he not only printed it in *The Criterion*, but used it extensively in the writing of his "Second Thoughts" — alluding, of course, to Mr. Eliot's "Second Thoughts about Humanism," published in your issue of July, 1929.

So long as Mr. Shafer contents himself with believing, even in print, that his critical opponents are dishonest, ignorant, abusive (this from Mr. Shafer!), muddled, and incompetent, there is only one inference that gentlemen will make, and only one inference that they will fail to make explicit. And when Mr. Shafer accuses one of his opponents of borrowing ideas from another opponent, as he accuses Mr. Eliot of borrowing from me, he will go serenely unrebuked — until, as in the present instance, there happens to be documentary evidence to refute him.

I know, from correspondence with Mr. Eliot, that his "Second Thoughts about Humanism" was finished before my essay reached him, and that his reference to my essay therein was added later, out of the generosity that a critic sometimes feels for a fellow critic. Since Mr. Eliot is obviously "a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline" — I quote from a quotation of Mr. Shafer's — he cannot be expected to defend himself against such an attack. I have Mr. Eliot's letters to prove my point. I am sure the Editors of THE HOUND & HORN will help to vindicate, by printing this letter, the gentle discipline that Mr. Eliot's critic so much admires.

ALLEN TATE

BOOK REVIEWS

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, S.J.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, S.J. *By G. F. Lahey, S.J. New York. Oxford University Press.* 1930. $3.00.

THE POEMS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, S.J. *Edited by Robert Bridges. New York. Oxford University Press.* 1930. $3.50.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in 1844. He went to school at Highgate where Keats and Coleridge had been educated and there won the prize for poetry. In 1862 he went to Oxford where he became involved in the end of the Oxford movement, came under Pusey's influence, then, much to Pusey's annoyance, became a Catholic and was received into the Church in 1866. Two years later he entered the Society of Jesus and died at the age of 45 while teaching Greek and Latin in the University of Dublin. Thirty-three years later Robert Bridges published the small volume of his verse which Saintsbury in his huge work on prosody refers to as dead poetry, but this year these poems are being reprinted with additions to the original volume and the Oxford University press has published his life, by a member of his Order.

This biography is disappointing. Perhaps it ought to be a relief to find a man who does not invent false solutions to psychological problems, but Father Lahey does not seem to be conscious of any problems to be solved. He obviously has set out to write the life of a poet, but though this poet was a Jesuit, of his religious life he tells us almost nothing. We have details about his family, his childhood, his school and college years, but a curtain falls over him when he enters the Order as though all that happened to him there could be taken for granted. We see him again, it is true, in his correspondence with Newman, Canon Dixon and Coventry Patmore. The charm and solidity of his mind appear in these letters and the profound respect he seemed able to inspire in these men who were all much older than he. But of the Jesuits he lived with we have only a few trite notices that they wrote about him after his death. What little we are told of his religious life serves only to suggest questions which are never answered.

Why to begin with did Hopkins turn away from the Oratory where Newman would gladly have received him? We have a letter from Newman approving the young man's choice but approving without comment. One supposes that the severer discipline of the Jesuit order appealed to him; but how did it appeal? We are told that in school Hopkins showed an extravagant taste for self-discipline. Was it asceticism that chiefly attracted him, or was there also an intellectual attraction? We have two photographs of him. The first is placed by Robert Bridges as a frontispiece to his poems. A delicate, beautiful face, a family likeness to many English poets, to Keats and Shelley and Swinburne, a sensuous mouth and eyes looking out at the world. The face of youth such as he himself describes it in *Morning, Midday and Evening Sacrifice:*

"The dappled die-away
Cheek and wimpled lip,
The gold-wisp, the airy-grey
Eye, all in fellowship—"

Then there is one of him as priest. The reproduction in the biography is the most convincing. He is perhaps not more than thirty; but it is an ageless face. All the youth has been burned out. The mouth has become firmer but less alive. The eyes are no longer looking out; they are turned towards an invisible world. It is the face of one who has achieved serenity through suffering. What steps brought about this change?

In convent and monastery schools there is a part of the building belonging exclusively to the community to which the children, because they are not allowed to go there, add imaginary mysteries. Father Lahey observes these traditions. He allows us to enter only into the visitor's parlor, a room that has been furnished carefully but without conviction, to suit our worldliness. We are left to wonder about those bleak corridors of the religious life. Perhaps it is by accident that there are a few passages in the book through which we get glimpses into the inner rooms. These are mostly found in the short chapter at the end devoted to his character. There is, for instance, a quotation from a Jesuit contemporary:

> "He was also most sensitive and this caused him to suffer much. I have rarely known any one who sacrificed so much in undertaking the yoke of religion. If I had known him outside, I should have said that his love of speculation and originality of thought would make it almost impossible for him to submit his intellect to authority." (p. 132)

In another place, referring to his interest in Duns Scotus, the author says:

> "This avocation for Scotism eventually became a passion with him (despite the fact that Jesuit theologians are Thomistic), so that he was often embroiled in minor duels of intellect." (pp. 131–2)

Now Scotism as I understand it, and we wish Father Lahey would explain it better, was a reaction against the rigidity of the *Summa*, a theology allowing more freedom for individual thought and so more scope for mysticisim.

Lastly come the scraps saved out of the diary of what Hopkins called "Intellectual Phenomena." Father Lahey has reprinted all that he could find in this pertaining to his spiritual life, but he makes no comment on the destruction of his spiritual diary, nor on the fact that he made no contribution to the spiritual literature of his Order. It is obvious that, as a religious, Hopkins was not considered interesting; and this seems hardly credible to any who have read his verse. Were his originality of thought and his Scotism counted against him?

In spite of Father Lahey's flat refutation of the "many writers" who "have drawn tragic portraits of Hopkins" — and the tragic portraits have undoubtedly been exaggerated — one cannot down the idea that Hopkins was thwarted, that though he found much consolation in his calling and showed perfect loyalty and devotion to the Society, something nevertheless prevented the full blooming of his talents.

There are two possible explanations of this. The Jesuit Order does not encourage mysticism. It is a militant Order and its members are trained as soldiers. The training is physical and mental and temperamental. The furthest recesses of man's consciousness are investigated and disciplined. All unconscious acts are eliminated

—one might say that the third dimension is removed for the sake of a fourth. Such training tends to desiccate the average man and certain temperaments of the creative and artistic type are unsuited to it. This leads to the second explanation. Apart from being unsuited to the discipline, was there a double aim in Hopkins' life that, because it was so essential a part of his character, would have thwarted his success under any circumstances? For all his absorption in religion, in spite of the "Cliffs of fall frightful sheer no-man-fathomed" that his spirit knew, in spite of his renunciation of poetry during his seven years' novitiate, it seems that Hopkins remained an intellectual and a man of letters. Now a consciousness of literature as a thing of essential value is perhaps irreconcilable with mysticism. One cannot help hurting the other if they are allowed to exist side by side in positions of equal authority. Whether essential to his character or not it is certain that the Order encouraged this double aim. He was professor of Latin and Greek, and, besides that, was preparing notes on Homer and Aristophanes and on English dialects, and though poetry was never allowed to be more than a hobby, yet, judging by the intricacy of his new prosody, it must have absorbed him deeply. On the other hand, his religious life and spiritual preoccupation kept him from fulfilling his poetic talent. That he must have known this and felt the importance of what he was neglecting seems to appear in one of his letters to Coventry Patmore. He had been urging Patmore to write. "If not done soon it will never be done, to the end of eternity." (p. 62) Eternity was a big word to use. Was he thinking of his own wasted gift? Then one cannot help reading between the lines in his charming letter to Dixon, whom he had never met, telling of his admiration for certain poems of his.

> ". . . and then I knew what I should feel myself in your position if I had written and published works, the extreme beauty of which the author himself the most keenly feels, and they had fallen out of sight at once and have been (you will not mind my saying it, as it is, I suppose, plainly true) almost wholly unknown: then, I say, I should feel a certain comfort to be told they had been deeply appreciated . . . and had not been published quite in vain . . ." (p. 80).

And finally there is the record of a deep poetical understanding in his remarkable criticism of Keats in which, defending his sensuality, he compares him to the young Shakespeare (p. 71).

But we must not forget in examining these symptoms of frustration in Hopkins' life that he was a Jesuit, to whom personal success is a thing of no importance. In becoming a priest he chose to immolate himself. A young man of great poetical promise renounced the profession of letters to serve God more directly — that he was forced back into scholarship — that his spiritual gifts were set aside as of no great value — that poems were inevitably written which, because of the force of his talent and the lack of time allowed for writing them, were necessarily imperfect, was a part of this immolation. Whatever meagreness we may find in Father Lahey's book it has made clear this one theme of sacrifice — the only important one in Gerard Hopkins' life. We have, moreover, some proof that this complete renouncement of self led him as far, in the short time allotted, as his genius may have been capable of going; and that more time was what he chiefly needed. Hopkins died at forty-five and there are signs in his last poems of a new mastery and of a serenity of style not to be found in his earlier work. The mystical sonnets are the best examples of this. They are written as Father Lahey tells us in the "dark night of the spirit." The apparent despair in them is not to be taken as a complaint for trials too hard to bear. They are the record of a state familiar to contemplatives who have advanced on the mystic way, a dark tunnel through which all must pass, an antechamber to their union with God.

The verse of these poems is simple and direct. The intricacies of prosody and diction have been fused into a solemn music that cannot distract us from his thought. There is nothing tentative, for instance, in the following:

"Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
  Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes

Now, leavèd how thick! lacèd they are again
With fretty chevril, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build — but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain."

* * * * *

It is fortunate that any of his poems survive. They were written for himself, because he had to write, and, though he sent them to his friends, to Robert Bridges and Coventry Patmore and Canon Dixon, they discouraged him from publication. In those days of limpid Tennysonian syntax they were considered too obscure. This obscurity, though it has not entirely disappeared, has faded for us, not only because verse has in general become more intricate and cryptic than it was in the 80's, but also because, though the obscurity is often due to a too close packing in of thought, it can in many cases also be imputed to the fact that Hopkins was trying to do something with the language that others have tried since, but that was unknown to his English contemporaries.

Hopkins was an innovator in two ways — in prosody and in his use and arrangement of words. Father Lahey has an interesting chapter on his prosody that helps to clarify Hopkins' very difficult preface to the poems. He was one of the first to advocate scansion by stress rather than by syllabic feet. He heard new rhythms that were more complicated and less regular than the smooth-flowing verse of his time. By scanning several verses for us according to his theories Father Lahey shows us what these were, makes it easier for us to hear the music of his verse, to understand why he sometimes had to accent his beats, and why for instance he allowed himself such vagaries as to break a word in two for the rhyme as in *The Wind Hover:*

"I cáught/this mór/ning mór/ning's mí/nion, kíng-/
dóm of daylight's/dáuphin,/dápple-dawn-drawn/Fálcon, in his/ríding/"
(Lahey 102–3)

There is often a turgid quality in his versification that comes from lack of sureness, and sometimes his sounds are as harsh and ugly as Browning's worst, though for very different reasons. But when he does succeed one is conscious of a new richness of sound, an orchestration of vowels and consonants and varying feet that makes one wonder if Hopkins' genius, given a freer rein, was not of weight and originality at least equal to any in the Nineteenth Century. Take *The Leaden Echo:*

"How to kéep — is there any ány any, is there none such, nowhere known
some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, láce, latch or catch or key to keep
Back Beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . .
from vanishing away?"

There is a nervous driving force in this poem that bulges and eddies like the waters of torrent. Or take the first stanza of the *Wreck of the Deutschland:*

"Thou mastering me
God! giver of breath and bread;
World's strand, sway of the sea;
Lord of living and dead;
Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,
And after it almost unmade, what with dread,
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee."

In regard to the other innovation, his new diction, Father Lahey says very little. As a child, Hopkins was taught painting and music, and showed great aptitude for both. It seems as though in his poetry he had not forgotten them. The sound and color of the words is as important to him as their meaning.

In such lines as

"Wiry and white-fiery whirlwind-swivellèd snow
Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps."
(*The Wreck of the Deutschland*)

or

"My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled and quenched in leaves the leaping sun,"
(*Binsey Poplars*)

He has found combinations of sound that apart from their meaning create the emotion he is trying to reproduce. Mallarmé and Rimbaud were doing the same thing in France but carrying it much further from grammar and accepted syntax. The old rules of the language still hold Hopkins, and his intricacy is partly due to the fact that he is never willing to break the logical sequence; he tries to make a grammatical statement that is at the same time an image of the kind that doesn't need grammar. He was aiming in the direction that was to lead to modern writing. There is a curious likeness to his language in some descriptive passages of *Ulysses;* such a phrase as

> "Blue bloom is on the
> Gold pinnacled hair." (1922 ed. p. 245)

or of incoming tide

> "It flows purling, widely flowing, floating foam-pool, flower unfurling." (p. 49)

and of waves

> "The white maned sea horses, champing, brightwindbridled," (p. 38)

are by Joyce and might be by Hopkins. Whether or not there is any connection between them (Joyce was ten years old and already at his Jesuit school when Hopkins died in Dublin) it seems as though, thirty years apart in time, from the opposite ends of experience and with very different goals in view — if one can call Joyce's disintegration a goal — these two men were trying to wring a new suppleness out of English.

But how mention Joyce without remembering a great many things about Jesuits? Since Father Lahey does not help us one is tempted to turn to *Ulysses*. Discounting Joyce's blasphemous reaction against his Catholic childhood, the portrait of Father Conmee is obviously accurate enough to give some idea of Hopkins' surroundings.

> "The superior, the very reverend John Conmee S. J. reset his smooth watch in his interior pocket as he came down the presbytery steps. Five to three. Just nice time to walk to Artane. What was that boy's name again? Dignam, yes. *Vere dignum et justum est.*" . . . . . (1922 ed. p. 210)

There are four pages of this sort of thing out of which emerges a terrifying full length portrait of an automaton, finished and smooth and cheerful in every movement and able to fulfil any function that could be asked of him. I do not mean to suggest that the Jesuits Hopkins lived with were all like that, but there may well have been a few of them and it is likely that they were in positions of authority and had small sympathy for one who could write

"... of a rack
"Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless,
thoughts against thoughts in groans grind."
(*Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves*)

A man of Hopkins' temperament could not live the organized religious life without suffering; but is there any life in which he could have found less? His heroic solution was the deliberate choice of hardship. He took it as the proof of the reality of his spiritual joys — and it became the substance of his life and of his poetry.

This attitude is very alien to the optimistic materialism of the 19th century. It is true that a type of literary mysticism was in vogue towards the end of it — Rossetti, Francis Thompson, Alice Meynell. These and others appear to have been charmed by the spiritual life, but what they tell us about it is not convincing. They only repeat what they have heard and imagine what they would like to feel. Hopkins, on the other hand, writes only of his own experience. He is never derivative. Perhaps one must go back to the 17th century to find in English an equal solidity of spirit.

T. S. Eliot has lately published a volume of religious verse in which there is a sustained perfection of language that Hopkins never achieved, but it, too, is written from the outside. It is like a beautiful gate into the inner country. He has built it for us out of ancient prayers and poems and symbols. He has made us heirs to his reading and to the emotions that reading gave him. But Hopkins never quotes, not even from the Liturgy. He has so much to say that is his own, and when he takes us into his inner landscape, though he uses no familiar phrases to describe it, yet we know that we are seeing the same country that St. Teresa and St. Augustine describe.

"O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed." . . . .
(Sonnet: *No worst, there is none*)

"I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;" . . . . .
(Sonnet: *I wake and feel*)

"Not, I'll not carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist-slack they may be — these last strands of man
In me. . . ."
(Sonnet: *Carrion Comfort*)

Out of these depths he calls to the help that surely comes. As in the sonnet to *Patience:*

"And where is he who more and more distils
Delicious kindness? — He is patient. Patience fills
His crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know."
(Sonnet: *Patience hard thing!*)

Or in the sonnet called *Peace:*

"When will you ever, Peace, wild wood dove, shy wings shut,
Your round me roaming end, and under by my boughs?

* * * * *

O surely, reaving Peace, my Lord should leave in lieu
Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite,
That plumes to peace thereafter."

Even in passages as short as these one cannot avoid Hopkins' mannerisms, what he himself calls his queerness. There are many passages and some whole poems that are obscure and clumsy. *The Bugler's First Communion* is so rough and ugly that one wonders why it was included by Bridges except as a metrical experiment. It seems in this case and in that of a few others that the ugliness is due to more than lack of experience and fluency. There is sometimes in Hopkins a Wordsworthian lack of taste — an emotional naïveté that is embarrassing. Whether this was due to the narrowness of his experience or was inherent, leads into a fog of surmise; at any rate in certain of his poems this is what repels us more even than the stiffness of his technique.

Patmore said of his poems that they had veins of pure gold set in impenetrable quartz. They seem to me to be more like fragments of great sculpture half hidden by rubble. A little patience will yield us a beauty that will become a part of our mind's possession.

Hester Pickman

COLT, STRANGER AND THE DESERT TREE

ANABASIS. *A Poem by St.-J. Perse. With a translation into English by T. S. Eliot. London. Faber and Faber Limited.* 1930, 10s. 6d.

Mr. Eliot has been at pains to translate, write a preface for, and persuade his own publishers to bring out what appears to be an accurate text of the original French of M. St.-J. Perse's *Anabase.* Other European poets may have been more fortunate in their translators; none in our time has been presented to England and America under more impressive auspices.

Of the poet who calls himself St.-J. Perse one hears that his name is Saint-Léger Léger, that he was born in the Antilles, has for some years been in the foreign service of France, and in the course of his career has lived much in the East and the tropics. The French use *l'Orient* to designate the Near East, the country lying between, say, the Balkans and Persia. *Anabase*, like its predecessor, *Eloges*, should seem to be situated in these *parages*, and like *Eloges*, the later work treats of the life of a primitive folk. From an exposition of this poem which M. Lucien Fabre published some years ago in the Nouvelle Revue Française, Mr. Eliot has borrowed a series of interpretative titles for its ten movements or cantos. So expounders of *Ulysses* used to proffer us descriptive titles of its numbered chapters. Briefly, *Anabase* is the epic of an Asiatic conqueror[1] who plans the founding of a city, consults his priests, builds his city, undertakes a restless march across wide deserts to a new country, is acclaimed, and cannot find tranquillity for dreams of conquest overseas. "The poem," Mr. Eliot says, "is a series of images of migration, of conquest of the vast spaces in Asiatic wastes." He makes no mention of the Song which precedes and the other Song which follows the ten divisions called *Anabase*, and it may be that they were included by the poet for no reason at all. Yet, this is improbable: they stand like the door into and the door out of *Anabase* proper, porches of a palace which bear their own hieroglyphs and are perhaps an index to what transpires inside. In the opening "stanza" of the first Song we read:

---

[1] Probably Syrian: see the reference, pp. 52–3, to the Seleucidae, which Mr. Eliot, for his own reasons, prefers to write with a small *s*.

> Un homme mit des baies amères dans nos
> mains. Etranger. Qui passait. Et
> voici qu'il est bruit d'autres provinces
> à mon gré.

It would be well to know who speaks, and who is the Stranger. Is this the conqueror inspiring the poet? Is it a foreign story-teller or soothsayer inspiring the conqueror to new conquest? He brings news "to my liking, of other provinces," a reference followed by mention of a rush of wind out of a bronze tree, which, since the Anabasis begins soon after, may be the voice of the Stranger (1) telling his own conqueror story, (2) chanting to the conqueror, or (3) symbolizing poetry itself singing to the poet. The carving at the bottom of the door which shuts upon this Anabasis contains these lines:

> Mais de mon frère le poète on a eu des
> nouvelles. Il a écrit encore une chose
> très douce. Et quelques-uns en eurent
> connaissance. . . .

There is assuredly some relation between the closing song and the opening song; the two are related to the ten divisions which separate them; it is probable that they hold a key to the poem. Mr. Eliot says nothing about them (or was it M. Fabre who omitted mention of them?). "It is better to read such a poem six times," Mr. Eliot says, "and dispense with a preface." But when a poem opens with a colt, bronze leaves, bitter berries, a Stranger — all symbols patently composed into an allegory — if one is, in a preface, to elucidate the poem at all, one ought to begin with an elucidation of the allegory. *Anabase* itself is really not so mystifying as to demand interpretation; after the first two or three divisions or movements, the "meaning" in broad outline is clear enough. It is the Songs that are esoteric.

From the fragments quoted, it will be seen that this poem is printed as prose. We cannot say it is a "poem in prose," partly because of the falsely Baudelairean implication, and most of all because that description suggests something severely limited in dimension, rather consciously "artistic" and mannered in diction, something that could be called *soft*. *Anabase* is none of these. It evokes with magical credibility the wide and desolately stony deserts of Syria, suggesting unlimited expanse, uncharted wastes. It is crowded with a population of banners and horsemen, town-dwellers in their market squares, free wanderers on the march, with robes and scarves, beasts of burden, insects, rites and ceremonies, and a confused flora both tropical and of the temperate regions. In one canto, so to say, we squat among the merchants, the soothsayers, the water-carriers, the busy townsfolk. In another, by an equally potent enchantment we find ourselves marching against a people strange to our own (for we who read are insensibly made one with the conqueror's own people), in remote lands green and river-veined, and therefore unlike ours. These hordes and races, these seasons and water-courses, are like a composite of Marlowe's Tamburlaine, de Guigne's *Histoire des Huns*, with an occasional echo of the voice of Zarathustra. No more extraordinary visual imagination has come lately into poetry than that of M. Perse, and it is unmistakably a poet's vision.

> Chamelles douces sous la tonte, cousues de mauves cicatrices, que les collines s'acheminent sous les données du ciel agraire — qu'elles cheminent en silence sur les incandescences pâles de la plaine; et s'agenouillent à la fin dans la fumée des songes, là où les peuples s'abolissent aux poudres mortes de la terre.
>
> Ce sont de grandes lignes calmes qui s'en vont à des bleuissements de vignes improbables. La terre en plus d'un point mûrit les violettes de l'orage; et ces fumées de sable qui s'élèvent au lieu des fleuves morts, comme des pans de siècles en voyage. . . .

Observe how the tranquillity of the scene is first suggested by the liquid *l* of the feminine of "chameaux"— *chamelles douces;* then the pastoral quiet of the shearing, the *tonte* with its painless scars; and the fusing of camels with hills and with the "data[2] of the *agrarian* sky"; the hills marching like camels, kneeling in the haze, in the far-away smoke of dreams, of that land where whole tribes crumble into the powdered earth that is death. This same peace is in the long lines moving towards a bluish tone that might almost be one's own vines seen from afar. (The palette is mauve, smoky blue, violet, and the burnished and pallid colour of sun on plain.) Here and there on the horizon the violet threat of the storm is deepened as it hovers close over the earth; and the storm-blown sands that rise above the dead river-bottoms and move like the trailing skirts of the centuries that pass through this ancient land. . . . The last sentence of the quotation is "unfinished"; unfinished as is the close of a phrase in music.

---

[2] A vine-grower, standing among his vines and pointing with his stick to the sky, once said to his grandson, "Up there you see my bank, the weather."

Mr. Eliot says of *Anabase*, "It's sequences, its logic of imagery, are those of poetry and not of prose." What, I find now that it is done, has turned into a free translation of this most beautiful passage, was intended only to be such an elucidation of the text as would bear out Mr. Eliot's contention. The assonances, of course, are those of poetry, not only in the simple *collines s'acheminent*, and the *là où les peuples s'abolissent*, but in the subtler inversions of *douces sous* and *pâles de la plaine*.

I shall have a word to say later of Mr. Eliot's translation. I wish now only to observe that in the single respect of rhythm and stress it fails — as perhaps it had to fail — to render the tonality of its original. For this reason, what is inherently poetic in this poem must be lost to him who reads only the translation. Perhaps the best way of establishing this is to quote examples of the many lines, on nearly every page of *Anabase*, which are pitched in the cadence of a recognizable classic French metre, most often the octosyllabic line of the ode and the twelve syllables of the celebrated Alexandrine. Almost the whole of the extract already quoted could be cast into the ode form:

Chamelles douces sous la tonte,
Cousues de mauves cicatrices,
Que les collines s'acheminent. . . .

Nothing is clearer than that M. Perse did not mean his poetry to be read in this fashion, since he did not write it so; and when we set up his lines thus on the page we are confessedly unfair to his poem.

Yet the inner rhythm is there, and, unfair or not, by exposing it we take an occasion to inquire into the difference between this poetry and formal metric poetry. Mr. Eliot, in this specimen of his always suggestive prefaces, declares that "Poetry may occur, within a definite limit on one side, at any point along a line of which the formal limits are 'verse' and 'prose.'" He draws that line as authoritatively as was drawn the papal line which once divided the Americas between Spain and Portugal, but he leaves us as ignorant of poetic territory as were left those Spaniards and Portuguese of the lands allotted them. This is to be regretted, for no one is better fitted than Mr. Eliot to explore the "definite limit on one side" that line. What we are trying here to learn, by our impertinent rearrangement of M. Perse's lines is, why they are poetry while they remain prose, and cease so often to be poetry when they are made verse.

Lines 2–4 of *Anabase*, in their word sequence, though not as they appear on the page, read:

> J'augure bien du sol / où j'ai fondé ma loi.
> Les armes au matin, / sont belles et la mer.
> A nos chevaux livrée / la terre sans amandes . . .

These are Alexandrines of a sort; quantity and caesura are impeccable.[3] Even as here set out, taken singly they are lines of poetry. But what *poetic* incoherence we should feel in a sequence of a hundred such lines! Yet as prose they are not incoherent; they are comprehensible singly, and together they stimulate what may loosely be called a poetic emotion. Out of many examples, I select these few which follow.

> Aux pays fréquentés / sont les plus grands silences,
> Aux pays fréquentés / de criquets à midi.

We read this in the body of the poem, as part of the poem, and no recognition of its banality of thought, image, and diction comes to mind. As two Alexandrine lines, it falls to the level of François Coppée. In another place — a very good place, indeed — we come upon

---

[3] It must be confessed that two or three Alexandrines without rhyme are unthinkable, and by this much is the validity of the experiment assailable.

Je ne sais qui de fort / a parlé sur mon toit.
Et voici que ces Rois / sont assis à ma porte.

Very convincing this is, read as prose-poetry; but cruelly removed from its context and read as verse it becomes — what? Gide-in-1890? the spirit of Maeterlinck? Even the later, the *sous*-Wordsworthian, Jammes is echoed in this most impeccable of Alexandrines:

Le Vérificateur / des poids et des mesures.

And any one who has read *Anabase* will assure you, as I do, that this line has its place in the poem, that in its place it is *poetically* evocative of the administration of the conqueror's affairs. Only rarely, by what chance? by what wind out of a schoolboy's memory? is blown up an echo of Racine:

Et les princes déchus dans les sables du Nord,

a line worthy to be spoken by Titus, by Mithridate.

Mallarmé was troubled by the blank page. To throw words upon it seemed to him like a cast of the dice. He felt the significance of the arrangement of letters, the significance for poetry of the page as unit, as pattern. Is it absurd to suggest that in this experiment we may find evidence of the importance of his problem? Would that Mr. I. A. Richards and Mr. Herbert Read together took this poem as their text, the first to tell us what is the function of the eye in reading poetry, the second to expound the science of its rhythms. (Unless, as is possible, this is a quack experiment.) For myself, I cannot resist the temptation to believe that this experiment allows one or two valid conclusions.

I assume Mr. Eliot's *dictum* to be true, and that poetry may be present both sides the line which divides prose from verse. It seems then to follow that M. Perse's poem contains many lines which would not be acceptable in a poem in which the formal rules of prosody had been observed. I am not prepared for this reason to say that not all M. Perse's prose is poetry. There is the theory that a poem should perhaps be read as a whole only; and there is the more considerable fact that *Anabase* possesses its own internal rhythm and tone, is so to say a poetics in itself, and for this very reason evokes rather than enlightens, exalts rather than entertains.

Yet I suspect that when we read what on the page looks like prose, with whatever conviction we may feel it to be poetry, we do take the indifferent with the good, the failures with the successes, more heedlessly, less critically, than when we read verse. I do not of course remember what one wrote in Paris about *Anabase* when it made its first appearance, but I dare say the poem was on the one hand abominated out of prejudice by the academic reviewers, and on the other hand extolled uncritically by the author's alert and sympathetic sponsors and admirers in, as it was then, the rue de Grenelle and the rue de l'Odéon. And I incline to doubt that, had the poem been written in verse, the lines which are weak would be overlooked, — least of all by the poet's friends. Critical examination of a prose poem is rare: who, in so many years, has yet evaluated Lautréamont's *Maldoror* as poetry?

I have said that the *locus* of *Anabase* may be Syria, and have implied that the time might be that of the royal line of Seleucus; but indeed the poem has a deeper significance. To an imaginative reader, it could readily seem a French *Waste Land*, a rejection — in this case serene and without effete nostalgia or wearied disgust — of the values of the industrial era. Here we have primitive life celebrated without benefit of Frazer or Weston, here there is no romantic ideology, no emotion that could be dismissed as "literature." For this reason, we who read *Anabase* under the electric lamp are not disposed to feel that it might have been written by such a light. We are not uneasy lest this emotion has been trumped up, because we do not at any moment see the face of a poet of our day. Never was there a better occasion for a pseudonymity which is a kind of higher anonymity such as is evoked in the masterly invention of the name, St.-J. Perse. "St. John-of-Persia!" one all but exclaims. There are two explanations of our acceptance of this anonymity. The first is that we do not hear in this voice an accent of self-pity, a reiterated oblique declaration that life is a misery because the poet himself has suffered. The single speech in which the poet unmasks is one of moving dignity:

> Et ce n'est pas qu'un homme ne soit triste,
> mais se levant avant le jour, et se tenant
> avec prudence dans le commerce d'un vieil
> arbre, appuyé du menton à la dernière

> étoile, il voit au fond du ciel à jeun de
> grandes choses qui tournent au plaisir. . . .

These words, pronounced in the postlude, after the Anabasis is ended, are followed by the closing words of the poem: ". . . mon frère . . . le poète a écrit encore une chose très douce. Et quelques-uns en eurent connaissance." . . . The other explanation I believe to be due to the poet's choice of words. Apart from a few Gallicised Greek words, it is the place of the word and not the word itself which lends colour and emotion to this poet's lines. St.-J. Perse avoids the language of Villehardouin, say, as English poets would be better advised to avoid the verbal forests of Broceliande that dot the *N. E. D.* Mr. Eliot says of *Anabase*, "this is a piece of writing of the same importance as the later work of Mr. James Joyce, as valuable as *Anna Livia Plurabelle*." No statement could be more confused, no parallel more false. It is one of the triumphs of St.-J. Perse that with words which are the common possession of every French schoolboy, he is able to brush a scene as vast and sustain an emotion as intense as these which fire and spread over *Anabase*. It is largely because he has not recognized this that Mr. Eliot's translation is so unsatisfactory. "Ungrateful task" is a phrase which might have been inspired by the job he undertook with patent devotion and with no likely hope of acclaim. The result, for all Mr. Eliot's *trouvailles*, his occasionally admirable renderings of difficult passages, is deplorable. Referring to St.-J. Perse as "half-translator," Mr. Eliot says, "What inaccuracies remain are due to my own wilfulness, and not to my ignorance, which the author has corrected; and not to the author's ignorance, for he has . . . a sensitive and intimate knowledge of the English language." It is not easy to measure degrees of familiarity with a foreign language. St.-J. Perse, poet and diplomatist, may not know that "levin" and "sallet" are not words of the same ready acceptation and direct recognition as *éclair* and *casque*. Mr. Eliot may not realize that in a country where, in 1930, an editorial writer can begin an article with the sentence, "Jamais peut-être début d'été n'aura annoncé saison plus tourmentée," it is not necessary for poets to go to dead speech or to sub-languages for aid in the solution of the problems of poetry. "Sovegna vos" writes Mr. Eliot in one of his recent poems: I know no French poets who borrow thus. It is clear that St.-J.

Perse deferred too easily to his translator, and did not know he was being "Eliotised." One does not translate *vieillesse* by "Senectus," *éclair* by "levin," *pièges* by "springes," *casque* by "sallet," the decent, homely *caleçons* by the advertiser's cant, "camiknickers." What is valid in Mr. Eliot's own poetry — the exhumation, as it were, of mediaeval and other literary sensibilities, the satiric sadness he once expressed so precisely and movingly by the "camiknickers" kind of word, the personal surrender to England reflected in his later, *Times*-leader prose style, is by no means proper to express the poetry of St.-J. Perse. Mr. Eliot seems to recognize that he has been wilful; he does not recognize that he may have been wrong. Even apart from inaccuracies, apart from the wilful botching of the first and third stanzas of the closing Song, he has now and then betrayed his poet in the matter of sensibility. For example, when St.-J. Perse writes, "Il vient de ce côté du monde," etc., and "le vent se lève," which is straightforward diction, Mr. Eliot translates "*Comes* from this side of the world," etc., and "*Rises* the wind," introducing a base kind of rhetoric where there is none at all. On the other hand, he translates by, "Our eyelids sewn with needles! praise to the waiting under our eyelids!" (*sic*), the strongly accented, "*Cousues* d'aiguilles nos paupières! *louée* l'attente sous nos cils!" These exclamations have the force of emphatically stressed iambs. The declamatory intention is so clearly absent from one place and present in the other that one is mystified, not to say irritated, by Mr. Eliot's "wilfulness." It is the business of a translator of literature (I do not speak of the generality of books offered for translation) to produce upon the sensibility of his reader an impact as identical as possible with that made by the author upon the reader of the original text. This, whatever his private reasons, Mr. Eliot has not done.

In its details, neither the imagery nor the expression of *Anabase* is absolutely flawless, but the poem progresses steadily towards greater clarity of vision and coherence of diction, and is overwhelmingly beautiful. It is a fusion of a kind of mystical raptness with an intimate experience of the earth. By a steadfast domination of his imagination, an extraordinary power of evocation, and a strange beauty of metaphor, St.-J. Perse imposes himself as a poet of great parts. One is unquestioningly convinced of the importance of *Ana-*

base: it may be a masterpiece, it is very likely to be an "influence." And one is irresistibly — if idly — curious about the future of St.-J. Perse, because his language itself seems *indispensable* for any vision but the vision of this Anabasis. Doubtless he knows himself best who has published so little in nearly ten years.

LEWIS GALANTIÈRE

CINQUE CENTO CHARLES

The Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim. *By Charles Moore. Houghton Mifflin, Boston,* 1929. $6.00.

For a century and a half, architects in the United States have practiced three diverse manners: Antique, Medieval, Renaissance, which have never fallen into absolute desuetude, which may be permanent, and which with great effort have risen to few monuments; while, for three hundred years, the surrounding landscape has been focused upon the somber beauty of a land where storehouses, rather than dwelling houses, houses of work, rather than houses of praise, whisper to the mind in the same accents which other structures speak in other lands.

Charles McKim, in the middle of our architecture, stands as Charles Bulfinch stands at the beginning. Both were eminently unoriginal, eclectic, dependent upon documents and upon subordinates whose independent practice was inferior to their masters. Each was a tactful master who designed in reference to the native past. Neither did many works in the Medieval. Both contributed to the Industrial. Bulfinch was so tactful that much of his work seems older than it is. McKim, less tactful, had a firmer hold on a broader terrain.

It is twenty years since McKim died, yet not only in the New York office made illustrious by his name, but in every school of American art his iniquitous doctrine of restraint is obeyed. Most of his work would seem, but for its merit, contemporary. Few men are of equal importance in the fixation of American taste. The publication of his *Life* affords an opportunity for appraisal when abstract design may be decreasing and expressive design increases.

In 1870 McKim began practice, forty years after Bulfinch ceased. The secret of his dominance over the national taste lay in his abandonment of the free style, which leaves a permanent though negative mark upon American expressionism; and in his recovery of a usable past, which acclimated the classical revival of the 80's.

The fifty years between 1880 and 1930, those between 1780 and 1830, and the Colonial century and a half make up our canonical architectural history. Yet the apocryphal period of our "unusable past" (1830–1880, for the convenience of critics, cleft by the Civil War) is the more important.

In this half century all the manners employed by Bulfinch developed simultaneously, the Antique more vigorous in the first; in the second, the Medieval vitalized, or galvanized, by functionalism. Beyond this, any contrast between the classicism of the first and the medievalism of the second is misleading. But the aesthetic diversity of the period makes possible many such contrasts. During the second half, the use of the orders was debased so low that in 1887 McKim, like a Brunelleschi, had to instruct stone cutters in the simple elements of Vitruvius. Such a contrast suggests a neat simplification of the diversity: Mills, Richardson, McKim, equalled Antique, Medieval, Renaissance. How neat! But the 19th century was anything but neat! — Twenty-five years before the Civil War, designs were executed in the Italian Renaissance manner; and twenty-five years after the Civil War McKim's revival of this manner secured his fame. The manner was praised and condemned as an importation. So it was. But McKim was not its importer. He was familiar with many Boston examples of the 5 cento Renaissance, all separated by a generation from the Villard Block, whose designer, Wells, came to McKim's office in 1879 carrying these buildings in his eye. The north front of the Pallazzo Villard shows, more clearly even than the usually published court façade, the similarity between the Renaissance manner of the 50's and of the 80's. Not only the brownstone of which it is built, but the employment of the windows of the Roman Cancelleria, a favorite motive of the earlier usage, show it to be Victorian. McKim's 5 cento manner has meaning in the American scene precisely because it was a revival of an acclimated manner. Were it otherwise, it would be (as monuments in full, pure Gothic and Baroc are, and as McKim saw them to be) out of place over here.

In this manner McKim was most at home, most sure of his convictions and most securely to be judged. The judgment must be aesthetic, for all his work has such mistakes in plan as make the name of architect of dread to housewives. The Boston Library

(1887) can be judged quite as much by what it is not as by what it is. The East front is a frontispiece of abstract expression and manipulated scale. The North front is its parody. These fronts are suited (by deep coffered soffits) to the site on a narrow thoroughfare of Hasting's New York Library, which, in turn (with bold pavilions), is fit for the Boston site. The staggered pitch of the Boston Library's hipped roof, presenting as of two stories to Copley Square a mass which is revealed as of three stories to the court; and its absence of the *impenetralia*, towards which the interior seems everywhere to lead, are aspects which distressed two such acute critics as Brooks Adams and Henry James. The quality of beauty of the interior is dependent upon the advisability of shoving Sargent's allotted space into the garret (as it was advisable to shove Eliot's into the kindergarten), upon the quality of Abbey as a mural illustrator, and upon the compensation Puvis makes for the absence of the invited Whistler and La Farge. Whatever its quality of beauty, it deserves more praise than is implied by its rank of the most beautiful interior in this land.

The University Club (New York, 1900) and the Morgan Library (1903) thrust out at us a problem in aesthetic psychology, — what did McKim and Morgan see when they looked at Pinturricchios painted by Pinturricchio that they could stand looking at the sight of Pinturricchios painted by Mowbray? McKim's association with White and St. Gaudens has obscured the significance of the fact that he, the most eminent American architect, was born of Quakers.

After the Civil War, the Baroc flourished beside the functionalized Gothic. Richard Hunt, a practitioner in both manners, despite his talent and training, clarified neither until the rise of McKim. The earlier time had sought to manage the Industrial by fulfilling the purpose (with no theory of expressing it). But after the Civil War, the Gothic struggling to express a machine age was twisted into the strangest shapes. Hindu architecture has a rationale. It is the fascination of Eastlake that it has also.

Against the expressive design of the second half of the apocryphal period McKim opposed, first White's delicate use of motives drawn from Richardson's practice (1870–1886) then Well's developed classical motives of before the Civil War, and, when the school of

Richardson took over functional theory and grew into the forceful if short-lived expressionism of the 90's, the strictest doctrine and practice of the purest Ultramontanism (Mead). With the academic Beaux Art Baroc he formed an alliance which left him in the ascendant. McKim was ambidexterous. The Exposition of 1892 was, to an unprejudiced eye, a Beaux Art charrette. But in the eyes which viewed it this Baroc display was a victory of classicism. Sullivan, hitherto acclaimed of Europe and Chicago, metamorphasized into a crank. He was ruined. He managed to live, however, and to record an opinion of the ascendancy.

Ten years after the Exposition McKim, in the designing of the New York Pennsylvania Station, poised himself for comparison beside the great artists of the past. In this, his Piraneseian nightmare of old Rome (How cold are thy baths, Apollo!), one obscure secret of the nature of romanticism in architecture is oracular: make the structure seem what it is not. It is a most extraordinary building, extraordinary not only by reason of its megalo-mania; not because it does not express a railroad station, but because it was made to look a Roman bath. (Why should anyone want to make a railroad station into a Roman bath? I cannot answer.) Nor can I insinuate that the Station has not a picturesque beauty. It is art, but surely not architecture. It is too architectural to be considered to be that. What a contrast its scattered plan presents to the station across town, Warren's (?) Grand Central Terminal, which serves its purpose conveniently, simply, gracefully, and, with no fuss about it whatsoever, is a great room.

The iron hall of the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, though it does not surpass its European precedent, is a landmark in the American Industrial which makes the rest of the building the more unbearable. Why was not the whole like this one room? Why are two halls placed next each other, one Caracalla, the other Crystal Palace? Like that earlier glazed basilica, this iron hall is, in view of its national surroundings, regrettable. But for this naked act of his, McKim's effort to drape "the solution of the problem of the skyscraper" with abstract rectangular Classicism might with seeming profit be compared with Medieval vertical expressive draping. But there is nothing howsoever to choose between these falsifications of the Chicago construction. "Architecture" has confused the natural chaos of engineering with such artificial disorder that our nation, from which all nations draw their Industrial inspiration, has left to others the fulfillment of implications which are inherent in the style which might be ours.

Except for steel and concrete monuments of industrial engineering, few structures, in the course of three hundred years, have arisen in the United States which, by style rather than by magnitude or merit, could serve to distinguish this country from any Dominion of the British Crown. All of McKim's activities aimed to perpetuate this condition. The architecture of his own country appalled him. It was luxurious enough, but it must have restraint. Restraint he preferred even to austerity. As his American academy on the Janiculum absurdly shows, he was fonder in his heart of London than of Rome. The early love for Ruskin shielded him while a student from the Baroc. His later love for the Ultramontane bucklered him against the Ruskinian expressive. His revived love (1877) of the old Colonial became (Harvard 1890) a sword against the new national style. His timidity fed his courage in his single aim: to keep America European. The luxurious restraint in his use of European styles, whether free or traditional, is distinguished only by merit or magnitude from contemporary British use.

In 1903, Edward VII conferred on him the Royal Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright are to be distinguished from Hunt, McKim, and Hastings, the recipients of this Medal, not only because their work differs from British work, but because of the quality of its difference. Their quality of balanced austerity and exuberance differs from the others' quality of mingled restraint and luxury exactly as the Industrial monuments differ from canonical American architecture. Austerity and exuberance, half the qualities of our national character, were repugnant to McKim. If these qualities prove more characteristic, more native than the qualities of luxury and restraint, which McKim's work bears in so marked degree, then the most excellent architect of the last fifty years will prove to have been an architect of secondary importance.

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT

GILSON ON AUGUSTINE

Introduction à l'Étude de Saint Augustine. *By Étienne Gilson. Paris, Vrin.* 1929. ii+352. 40 frs.

From time to time one learns with surprise, from conversation and book review, that the present age is one of great philosophical and metaphysical activity. There is a new metaphysics inspired by the theoretic advances of science and guaranteed by its new discoveries: one's surprise is not so much that the new approach should have brought it to the ancient doctrines which it states, but that it should show itself so naïve among old problems, that it should promulgate dogmatically theories which have always been suspect save in the context of a carefully constructed system, and that, confident in a method which it thinks of as discovery, it should neglect argumentation and dialectic while choosing among doctrines dialectically opposed. Thus far the philosophy based on science has been characterized chiefly by being a philosophy forgetful of its own past.

Under any circumstance, it would be wise to pause in the construction of theories to inquire what theories had been held relative to such problems in the past; in this case such a pause is indispensable, if not for philosophic progress, at least for philosophic sophistication. The difficulty lies, however, in restating past theories in a fashion that will reveal their live relevance to questions again agitated; it is a task for a philosopher as well as an historian of philosophy. The career of M. Étienne Gilson has been devoted to important services for philosophy in this direction. From an interest in Descartes and the beginnings of modern philosophy, which early made evident the need of tracing the beginnings of modern thought in the Middle Ages, M. Gilson turned to the study of doctrines from which it has been customary since the Renaissance to think that modern man could learn nothing. There followed vivid and well-grounded studies in the general setting of mediæval thought, particularly in the philosophies of Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventura, further work on the background of Descartes's thought, and numerous shorter essays in learned and popular reviews. The fully developed result of this study will doubtless appear shortly — a volume is announced for the present year on the mediæval antecedents of Descartes's philosophy and, this year also, Professor Gilson will deliver the Gifford lectures, presenting thus the results of his studies in metaphysics and natural theology from the platform from which many of the widely discussed modern metaphysical ideas were first promulgated. M. Gilson's activities in organizing mediæval studies have carried him far afield: he is professor at the Sorbonne and at the École des Hautes Études in Paris, lately professor of mediæval philosophy at Harvard University, now director of the recently established Institute of Mediæval Studies at the University of Toronto; he is director of the *Études de Philosophie Mediévale*, and co-editor of the *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*.

As the study of Descartes carried back to the study of mediæval philosophy, so the study of the problems and debates of the thirteenth century, when the authority of Augustine was invoked for divergent doctrines, when many philosophers borrowed his doctrines and few expressed open opposition to them, soon made clear the need to examine the philosophy of Augustine himself. The present work is an attempt to explore the doctrines of Augustine in his own writings. It is a difficult task. Professed Augustinians are at variance concerning the philosophy of Augustine. His doctrines have resisted systematic exposition and successive books stating his doctrines have stated different philosophies. Philosophers like Pascal and Malebranche, finally, who have been inspired by Augustine, have found systems so little to their tastes, that the very nature of the philosophy seems to be opposed to synthesis. Professor Gilson has made that character the center of his exposition. He has stated the philosophy as one in which the complete statement of any doctrine requires the statement of the whole philosophy, in which any point of beginning presupposes the doctrine for which it prepares, — as a philosophy, finally, in which digression is the proper mode of exposition.

Two characteristics of the study require comment: first, its method; second, the nature of the philosophy it expounds. Professor Gilson's historical method is one which applies itself exclusively to the study of ideas. There is no biography of Augustine in the work, and there is no attempt to account for his doctrines by the events of his life, notwithstanding that the new school of biography and of sociological philosophy could tell a good story of the life of the Saint who was son of a Christian mother and a pagan father (nagged finally to conversion), a rhetorician by profession, weighed by the sins of maintaining a mistress and a boyhood theft of fruit, converted finally from materialistic Manichæism to become a chief force in the foundation of a spiritual Christian philosophy. Professor Gilson has wisely seen that, although such an approach might have permitted him a tale and might even have given the air (as half a dozen rival stories would likewise) of having accounted for the doctrines of Augustine, it would have shed no light on the significance of the philosophy or the cogency of the arguments on which it is based. Likewise, he has wisely avoided the traditional problems which have been grouped about the evolution of Augustine's thought. There is a mass of controversial literature based on the circumstance that Augustine, writing his *Confessions* in 397–400, tells of his conversion to Christianity in 386; but in 386 he wrote four works in which his critics find a strong evidence of Neoplatonism but no trace of Christianity. Professor Gilson's position in most points of interpretation, strikingly radical among present day tendencies in analysis, is that it is usually safe to take a philosopher's statement of doctrine as actually his doctrine; the supposition that the philosopher has misinterpreted himself must face the more probable supposition that the historian or the psychological biographer has misinterpreted the philosopher in the error he discovers.

The philosophy which Professor Gilson restates here is in marked contrast to the philosophic positions held currently. In the preface he justifies the dedication of the work to his students in whom he had seen the thought of Augustine relive with "the vivacious freshness of a new discovery." The three parts of the book which take up in turn the problems of knowledge, of morality, and of metaphysics as they are treated by Augustine, make increasingly clear the novelty of this doctrine to one who had read chiefly in modern philosophy. According to it literally nothing can be learned from experience; the teacher can teach the pupil nothing new. It is a principle that the inferior can not effect the superior. Therefore, sensation can not be cause of an idea or an emotion of the mind, but the converse is the case: the idea confers intelligibility on the sensation, and the emotion is recognition of a need or an amelioration of the body. The orientation of the philosophy is opposed so diametrically to the modern habit of mind, that any isolated statement of doctrine must sound paradoxical. Yet in the context of the philosophic presentation to which they form part, the power of the doctrines increases as analysis is pushed further and further. Part of the peculiarity is in the place of importance which numbers and mathematics had long held in the Platonic tradition: changing things of experience could never account for knowledge of such changeless relations as numbers reveal; in wisdom and in mathematics man is oriented to eternal things above the mind according to which the mind knows and according to which things are.

But if the orientation of man in his knowledge is to eternal things, all the more the end of his well-directed activities is fixed in the eternal principles of wisdom. *Wisdom* is the adhesion of the mind to the source of light which illumines all its thoughts; *science* is the knowledge of changing sensible things which is ordered according to wisdom. Science is of means; wisdom of ends; the end of all philosophy (the love of wisdom) is beatitude. As it is by the ideas of the mind that experience is rendered intelligible, not by experience that ideas are constituted, so too it is by the presence to the mind of eternal ideas that the end of man is determined, not by the experiences to which he is subjected. To that extent the wisdom of Augustine is one which he recognized was not inaccessible to Plato and Plotinus; his philosophy becomes characteristically Christian in that it is faith, specifically the Christian faith (whose credibility is carefully subjected to the tests of reason) which supplies the end of both knowledge and action, and the means by which it is pursued.

Professor Gilson's exposition pursues properly, therefore, in the sequence of the three parts of his book, the course of the mind seeking God by the understanding, by the will, and finally in God's works. But it becomes evident as the exposition proceeds that the object of the will and the object of intelligence is the same, that the doctrine of knowledge can not be expounded without the doctrine of charity, and only toward the end is the reader permitted to divine that this triple approach is an approach to a triune God, the source of physics, logic, and ethics: God the Father, *causa subsistendi*, God the Son, *ratio intelligendi*, God the Holy Ghost, *ordo vivendi*. There emerges therefore at the end a forceful intimation of the relations of being, the one, the good, and the true in this philosophy, which almost makes one regret that the exposition had not been of the relations and identities of these metaphysical concepts rather than the metaphysical search that leads to them. Doubtless it is more in the spirit of Augustine himself to engage in the search for Being and the Truth, than in an inquiry into their nature; that latter inquiry is more proper to the spirit of Augustinians of the Middle Ages, and since there is every indication that this *Introduction to the Study of St. Augustine* is propædeutic to the study of mediæval Augustinism, it is not improbable that Professor Gilson will pursue the metaphysics of Augustinism even further than he has.

Meanwhile, an age in which philosophies of experience have taken on an unwonted strength, may learn some cautions from the self-examination which the arguments of Augustine should suggest. His fundamental tenet, *unless you shall have believed you will not understand*, has interesting applications to beliefs other than the specifically Christian faith about which his own philosophy revolved. It might suggest, since beliefs today are frequently called sciences, that facts are intelligible if theories are held, but theories do not grow out of facts. Augustine has arguments to support the Platonizing theories that have entered recently in the discussions of science, to contend that the advances of experimental science, whatever they may disclose concerning the psychology of learning, can reveal nothing concerning the methods of demonstrating or knowing. He has support for the contention that facts must suggest a diversity of hypotheses and a diversity of utilities, any of which would be sufficient for the facts, but truth and the good are discoverable only in the context of a system. Finally, since the mind, according to Augustine, knows itself better than things, and is closer to God the orderer of the world than to the world ordered, he suggests a reorientation of philosophic inquiry which is today beginning to be effected independent of his suggestion: instead of modelling a theory of science, a speculative psychology, and all the social sciences on the supposed plan of the physical sciences, it is beginning to be recognized that there are speculative truths by which physics itself must be organized. Whatever the ultimate values of the opposed positions, however, it is important that the subtle arguments and persuasive utility of a physics dependent on the relations of eternal objects and an ethics which pursues a good eternally present to the mind, reflected in all lesser goods (the one an object of divine illumination, the other an object of grace), should be considered again before another advance is made to a new philosophy, of questionable arguments and doubtful utility, which in its newer approach neglects what the older observed and explained.

Richard McKeon

TWO ANTHOLOGIES

CIRCUMFERENCE: VARIETIES OF METAPHYSICAL VERSE. *Edited by Genevieve Taggard. New York. Covici Friede.* 1929. $5.00.

OLIVE, CYPRESS AND PALM: AN ANTHOLOGY OF LOVE AND DEATH. *Compiled by Mina Curtiss. New York. Harcourt, Brace.* 1930. $2.50.

I

In a recent book,[1] the glitter of whose superficial cheapness should not blind the reader to its essential acumen, Laura Riding and Robert Graves have undertaken a thorough criticism of the ever-multiplying anthology. They have found very little good to say of the modern anthology, from the various *Oxford Books* down; they have exposed its editorial shortcomings, its inevitable dependence upon the vulgar taste which excludes anything that is not recognizably a poem of the "popular" family, its repetitiveness, its transience, its superfluity. They have showed how far it has come from the simple anthology of Meleager — a collection of favourite verses originally intended for a single friend — to the endemic fugitive volumes of today, which too often seem only to indulge the exhibitionism of the compiler, or serve the commercial ends of a sort of literary racketeering. Whether or not one chooses to accept all of their conclusions (and certainly one is unable to sympathize with a great deal of their incidental destructive work), it must be admitted that there are far too many anthologies (they reproduce themselves in cohorts), and that only a few of them are either useful or decorative. The best anthologies are either historical (Norman Ault's two volumes, for example, though they are far from good) or textual (*e.g.*, Bullen's old *English Garner* series); these serve a definite purpose, and are successful in so far as they are uncritical. But there is also a justifiable place for group collections (*Des Imagistes*, the *Fugitives* anthology), and for compilations of poems related by identity either of genre or of impulse. Miss Taggard's book belongs to the former of these last two classes, Mrs. Curtiss' to the latter. *Circumference* is a failure; *Olive, Cypress and Palm*, in spite of its name, a success.

---

[1] *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies. By Laura Riding and Robert Graves. New York,* 1928.

II

Circumference is a failure for various reasons. In the first place, it is not — indeed, it could never have been — what it professes to be: an anthology of "metaphysical" verse from 1456 to 1928. Miss Taggard states her purpose in a remarkable introduction:

> ". . . to collect into a book what may be considered the most malignant of Donne's verses, together with others since his time, down to the present, which seem to bear them a good comparison, not merely from the school commonly supposed to be metaphysical, but from English and American poets generally."

Then the compiler essays a definition of "metaphysical" poetry, — an attempt which leads her into much writing of the pseudo-purple kind, but which so involves her in ambiguities and contradictions that the reader is forced to one of two conclusions: either Miss Taggard does not know what "metaphysical" poetry is, and is clothing her ignorance in swell ostrean ascension-robes; or Miss Taggard is endeavouring to evolve a definition of "metaphysical" poetry that will cover every poem she is fond of. First we decide that there are only two genuinely metaphysical poets in the language: Donne and (*obsit omen!*) Emily Dickinson. (Emily Dickinson later becomes simply "Emily." One thinks of Joseph Auslander, and wonders if critics and anthologists fifty years hence will be referring to Yeats as "William.") Then we come to the conclusion that Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Browning, Blake, Pope, Dryden, Tennyson, Keats are metaphysical poets; or that they *would* be metaphysical poets if they *were* metaphysical poets; or — sometimes a poet is metaphysical, sometimes the same poet is not. "Keats is the clearest possible example of what a metaphysical poet is not," Miss Taggard declares. (*Circumference* contains two poems by Keats.) Blake, it seems, means what he says; "metaphysicians do not mean what they say"; therefore, — (*Circumference* misquotes *Tyger, Tyger* and includes nine other poems by Blake.)

If Miss Taggard's introduction is not of much help in defining her terms, her text is of less. One seeks in vain for a relating principle. One is particularly at a loss if one recalls Johnson's classic definition, and T. S. Eliot's fine expansion of it. What "good comparison" can there be between *Oh doe not die*, with its intricate clanging intellectualization of passion, and Cummings' pleasant obscenity, *i like my body when it is with your/body?* between Adelaide Crapsey's *Triad* and Stevens' *To One of the Fictive Music* (except that they are both ambiguous, and the former is absurd)? What "metaphysical measure" can relate Donne and Samuel Daniel, Eliot and W. R. Benet, Herbert and Byron, Tennyson and Marianne Moore? especially if no apparent "metaphysical measure" has been formulated? Miss Taggard's anthology is not a collection of metaphysical varieties at all. It is a compilation of her favourite poems, and as such, with a few exceptions, it speaks well for her taste. But what is the purpose of a compilation of favourite poems, however tasteful?

It remains to speak briefly of the text itself. Criticized in the light of no *rationale*, the selection is harmless. The pre-Elizabethan texts are unreliable: Miss Taggard seems to follow no consistent plan of orthography or pointing. The ascription to Byrd of *My mind to me a kingdom is* is unfortunate: Byrd wrote no verse, I believe. Raleigh is represented by a doubtful poem; Sidney by a single poem — not only his worst, but one of the worst in the language. Drayton's finest sonnet is given in modern spelling; Shakespeare's sonnets preserve the old orthography, but his song is printed and pointed in the modern way. Only Donne's more obvious poems are included (how can an anthology of "metaphysical" verse omit the *Nocturnall on S Lucies Day*, *The Relique*, and the *Hymne to God my God, in my Sicknesse?*), Crashaw and Vaughan are rather slighted, Herbert is well represented, and so on. . . . Chatterton's incredible *O! Synge untoe Mie Roundelaie* usurps space that might earlier have gone to Skelton or to Chaucer. The nineteenth century is here in force, and there is a lot of contemporary verse. Little of it is "metaphysical," and, except for Eliot, Marianne Moore, and Phelps

Putnam, none of it is of much value. Reading Helen Pearce's *How is this Vast World Garmented*, one sighs and wonders why Miss Taggard omitted Kilmer's *Trees*. This is an odd book.

III

Mrs. Curtiss' anthology succeeds because it is what it professes to be: a compilation of poems treating love and death. Mrs. Curtiss, of course, has chosen a less ambitious field; but one feels that she has approached her task with a more coherent intention than was Miss Taggard's. Her purpose, together with her reason for excluding any poets born after 1850, is succinctly and cleanlily expressed in an introduction devoid of misty cadences. Although one may be not entirely willing to admit the cogency of what seems to me a rather naïve theory: that *The Origin of the Species* is responsible for the altered direction in the course of elegiac poetry (Darwin was rather a symptom than a cause), one must admit the existence of the change and be grateful to the compiler for omitting poems which, however fine *per se*, could effect only discord in such a book as this.

Olive, Cypress, and Palm is arranged not in chronological order, but in sections which suggest an ascension of mood, from the apprehension of *Oh doe not die*, and the despair of *Fare thee well, great heart*, to the triumph of *Not marble, nor the guilded monuments,/ Of Princes*. The selection ranges from Skelton and Chaucer to the Preraphaelites. The texts are scholarly and, with a few possible exceptions, reliable. (One of the faults of *Circumference* is noticeable here, though to a less degree: Mrs. Curtiss has generally preserved the original orthography and pointing of the old poems — and rightly: modernization corrupts more than it facilitates; but she has excepted Shakespeare from this rule, and it is something of a shock to find Donne writing in what *looks* like an earlier language!) There is no editing, and, above all things, no "criticism," explicit or implied.

As to the poems themselves: one is again grateful to the compiler for including many selections that are automatically ruled out of more conventional anthologies, either because of their length or because of their difficulty. Here, for instance, are Spenser's *Daph-*

naida, so distressingly mutilated by Q in the *Oxford Book;* verses from Skelton, with no such painful attempts at modernization as vitiate the Skelton of the same anthology; fine, almost unknown poems of the madrigalian school and the more obscure poets of the seventeenth century (one, *Silence augmenteth grief*, a splendid lament for Sidney, here most precariously ascribed to Spenser, though the evidence afforded by the diction would point to almost anyone else, has been anthologized elsewhere only in Bullen's *English Garner*); and King's *Exequy to his Matchlesse Never to be Forgotten Freind*, in a text free of Q's excisions and Ault's revisions. There are other poems and fragments, the reason for whose inclusion is less apparent. Especially regrettable, I think, are the disjunct passages from Shakespeare. Cleopatra's lament over dead Anthony, beginning *Noblest of men, woo't die?* loses so much when it is torn from its context that it seems hardly justifiable to print it. Such a speech is only a fragment of a great rhythm, which in this case is the entire scene; as it stands here, it is like a few notes caught from the middle of a known and loved melody: it annoys because it is not wholly true. Similarly, the passage from *The Knightes Tale*, and the selections from Whitman, are things quite different from themselves in their proper contexts. But in general the inclusions indicate an unerring sensitive taste. There are no such trivial, quasi-anonymous verses as deface the latter portion of *Circumference;* there are no lapses into bathos, unless Coventry Patmore's poem be considered as such; the anthology fulfils its purpose, and in doing so makes accessible much verse whose loveliness has hitherto been almost unknown.

The only contemporary poem in the book is a memorial sonnet by Archibald MacLeish, which is much too fine not to be quoted:

One who has loved the hills and died, a man
Intimate with them, how their profiles fade
Large out of evening or through veils of rain
Vanish and reappear, or how the sad
Long look of moonlight troubles their blind stones —
One who has loved them does not utterly,
Letting his fingers loosen and the green
Ebb from his eyeballs, close his eyes and go.

But even men long after he is dead,
Seeing those hills, will catch their breath and stare:
As one who, reading in a book some word
That calls joy back, but can recall not where —
Only a crazy sweetness in the head —
Will stare at the black print till the page is blurred.

Fortunate book, to go out with such an epigraph!

DUDLEY FITTS

THE OLD DIPLOMACY

Portrait of a Diplomatist. The Biography of Sir Arthur Nicolson by Harold Nicolson. *Houghton Mifflin, September*, 1930. $5.00.

There was about Lord Carnock an undeliberate charm which no one who met him is likely to forget. But to the public he must remain more interesting as a type than as an individual. An impoverished Scottish aristocrat born in 1849, he belonged to a nation, a class, and a period, which regarded all unconventionality as affected or mischievous. Deeply religious and happily married, he seems hardly to have been touched by the disquietudes which recommend men to the biographer. In one respect, however, he differed from the typical member of the British governing class: he was Latin in his intellectual honesty. And this high-minded and eminently truthful gentleman as a result came to be regarded by German diplomatists and English Radicals as a Machiavellian villain, largely responsible for the war. Only the most prejudiced, I think, can retain this view after reading Mr. Harold Nicolson's book. It is true that Lord Carnock was a patriot. Moreover, he had that Anglo-Saxon dislike for the spectacle of incompetence and cruelty which has led the English, and is likely eventually to lead the Americans, into Imperialism against their conscious will. But he also disliked war. And when the war came, he was disgusted by the indecency with which it was conducted; he favored a Peace by arrangement, and was shocked by the Treaty of Versailles.

Lord Carnock's career took him to just those places in which diplomatic relations were most strained during the forty years preceding the war. Consequently Mr. Nicolson's book is not so much a life of his father as a history of pre-war diplomacy, and as such it must be reviewed. The only moral I can deduce from it is that patriotism has done even more harm in the world than religion. As Mr. Nicolson says, "it was considered 'patriotic' to desire that one's country should be larger, richer, and above all more powerful than any other country." It still is. And those who take this view are working to precipitate their country into a disaster even greater than that which overtook the world in 1914.

Mr. Nicolson is in natural reaction against the grotesque fable which placed the entire war-guilt upon German shoulders. "Before we blame the Germans, we must first blame our own Elizabethans. The spirit was exactly the same: the Germans, however, owing to a higher state of culture and rectitude, behaved less blatantly; and were less successful." But while his comments show a certain bias in favor of the Germans, his facts reveal them as the most nefarious, because the stupidest, the most suspicious and the most hysterical, of pre-war diplomatists. In 1902 the English, terrified by their isolated position, offered Germany an *Entente*, declaring that if this was refused they would have to turn to France. Holstein and Bulow dismissed this as "bluff." And this incredible folly was more than anything responsible for the war. Against the British, on the other hand, Mr. Nicolson holds up their grasping behavior over Walfisch Bay and South-West Africa. "Our great mistake was our failure to realize that Germany's desire to expand was perfectly legitimate." Moreover, by their perfidious behavior in 1898 and 1899 over the possible partition of the Portuguese Colonies the English forfeited their right to be trusted. Indirectly Lord Salisbury was more responsible than any other individual for the catastrophe of 1914.

But once these criminal mistakes had been made, could British diplomacy in the 20th century have adopted any wiser course? This, I think, is the most interesting problem raised by Mr. Nicolson's book. Various courses were open: (I) Isolation. After all Great Britain had survived the South African War, universally detested, it is true, but in spite of her weakness never attacked. On the other hand, the increase in the German navy and the continued tension with Russia in the East were alarming, and the possibility of a hostile Continental *bloc* was the nightmare of every British diplomatist. (II) An Alliance with France and Russia. (III) An Alliance with Germany. The greatest military and the greatest naval powers in the world could have kept the peace of Europe. In the light of our experience this seems to have been the only course which might have averted war. (IV) The *Entente* with France and Russia.

This course, which was adopted, seems to have combined every possible disadvantage. As Lord Carnock saw, "The *Entente* was sufficiently binding to encourage people in St. Petersburg and Paris, but not sufficiently binding to discourage people in Berlin." He wished, therefore, to transform the *Entente* into an Alliance. For he believed the Russians to be far more formidable and above all more trustworthy than they were. This was Lord Carnock's chief mistake. If the alliance had been formed, Russia might have dragged England behind her into a war. Despite this risk, an alliance would probably have been better than an *Entente.* But public opinion in England would not have stood it. In diplomacy a democratic country is always at a disadvantage.

And the representative of the democratic country in this instance was Grey. Grey is the most interesting figure in this chapter of diplomatic history. Mr. Nicolson says that he shares with Bethmann Hollweg the honour of being, alone of pre-war statesmen, morally unassailable. Merely because what Mr. Nicolson calls "his sad, eagle eyes" were fixed upon the ideal of peace. Of course Grey meant well. But he acted ill. He was shocked by the mendacity and suspiciousness of men like Aehrenthal and Isvolsky. "As a remedy for foreign intrigues he suggested that foreign statesmen ought to receive their education at an English public school." But in 1912 he made an agreement with Cambon. At the time he told his colleagues that this did not commit them. In 1914 he told the House of Commons that it did. In fact Grey the Liberal politician did not know what Grey the Foreign Secretary was doing. As a remedy for English muddle-headedness one may suggest that English statesmen ought to receive their education at a foreign *lycée.*

The evasive and high-minded Grey had a private secretary, Sir William Tyrrell, who resembled him — at any rate in evasiveness. Lord Carnock perceived the danger into which these two were carrying England, and with his immediate subordinate, Sir Eyre Crowe, was continually pestering Grey to make his position clear. It was useless. But if Grey had not made his position clear to himself, he had made it clear to the French. In committing her Mediterranean interests to France by the Naval Agreement of 1912, England had committed herself to the defense of French interests in the Channel and the North Sea. If Lord Carnock did not consciously realize this, it must have been because unconsciously he was determined that in the event of a Franco-German war, England should be on the side of France. And when the crisis came, there was M. Cambon with his "*petit papier*" ready to show the world that in fact England was committed.

Actually the invasion of Belgium provided an indisputable *casus belli*. (England had been at war from 1793 to 1814 to keep Antwerp out of the hands of a great Continental Power, and she was at war from 1914 to 1918 largely for the same reason.) But if the Germans had kept out of Belgium, Grey must have appeared perfidious either to England or to France. Indeed it was only the tearing up of that "scrap of paper" which saved him from perpetual if undeserved infamy.

Mr. Nicolson has enriched his book with brilliant portraits of persons and places. He has a gift, which he inclines to abuse, for graphic detail. But his summings up are marvels of neatness. "King Edward though too superficial to be a statesman was a supreme diplomatist." The German Emperor "came to represent the emotions of his people rather than their thoughts." "British statesmen are usually blind to their own tendencies but vividly aware of their own disinclinations." But the chief merit of the book is the clarity and proportion and impartiality with which it summarizes a prodigious mass of material into a compact and graceful shape. Mr. Nicolson has previously proved himself a good biographer and a better novelist. He now reveals himself as a most distinguished historian.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

68

THE Hound & Horn

Winter 1931

Rec'd
JAN 15 19
B. P. L.

E. E. CUMMINGS' LANGUAGE, *by* R. P. Blackmur

THE VARIOUS TREE, *a poem by* R. Ellsworth Larsson

LEONARDO AND THE PHILOSOPHERS, *by* Paul Valéry

ONLY WE ARE BARREN, *a story by* Alvah Bessie

POEMS, *by* Louis Zukofsky, Norman MacLeod, D. C. DeJong

THE SAD END, *a story by* K. T. Young

CHRONICLES - PHOTOGRAPHS - BOOK REVIEWS

Fifty Cents

THE
CRITERION
A Quarterly Review

EDITED BY
T. S. ELIOT

Subscription
$7.50
per annum

The publishers will be glad to send a specimen copy on application

FABER & FABER
24 Russell Square
London, W. C. 1

THE HOUND & HORN is published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, by THE HOUND & HORN, INCORPORATED. Publication Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Executive and Editorial Office, 10 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Single copies, 50 cents; subscriptions, one year $2.00, two years $3.50; Canadian subscriptions, one year $2.25; two years $4.00; foreign subscriptions, one year $2.50, two years $4.50. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Concord, New Hampshire, under the act of March 3, 1879.

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. IV, No. 2
January-March, 1931

CONTENTS

Notes on E. E. Cummings' Language, an essay by *Richard P. Blackmur* 163

The Various Tree, a poem by *R. Ellsworth Larsson* 193

Only We Are Barren, a story by *Alvah C. Bessie* 203

Aubade, 1925, a poem by *Louis Zukofsky* 229

Leonardo and the Philosophers, an essay by *Paul Valéry* 231

Turquoise Chant, a poem by *Norman MacLeod* 255

The Sad End, a story by *Kathleen Tankersley Young* 256

Seven Boys Sit at Night, a poem by *David C. DeJong* 260

Beginning Again with William Carlos Williams (Postscript to Henry Adams) *Louis Zukofsky* 261

CONTENTS

Chronicles

Art, on Leon Kroll *A. Hyatt Mayor* 265
Architecture, on The News Building *Elroy Webber* 270
Movie, on Ernst Lubitsch *Kenneth White* 273

Correspondence

Letter from *Lewis Galantière* 277
Letter from *William Carlos Williams* 277

Book Reviews

"A Draft of XXX Cantos," by Ezra Pound *Dudley Fitts* 278
"Ash Wednesday," by T. S. Eliot *Allan Tate* 290
"The Realm of Matter," by George Santayana *Richard P. Blackmur* 298
"Flowering Judas," by Katherine Anne Porter *Yvor Winters* 301
"My Thirty Years' War," by Margaret Anderson
"The Strange Death of President Harding," by Gaston B. Means
"How to Commit a Murder," by Danny Ahearn
"Men, Marriage and Me," by Peggy Hopkins Joyce
"Vagabond Dreams Come True," by Rudy Vallée *Stewart Mitchell* 306
"The Proof," by Yvor Winters
"The Gates of the Compass," by Robert Hillyer *Robert Fitzgerald* 313

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

The editors regret that the article on Pisanello, by Adrian Stokes, is unavoidably postponed due to most pressing obligations to publish material long overdue. The second part of Herbert Schwartz' "Some Problems of Musical Criticism" and Kenneth White's "George Kelly and Dramatic Device" have also been held over for the spring issue.

Richard P. Blackmur has contributed reviews, poems and stories to The New Republic and Poetry, and an article to the "Critique of Humanism."

R. Ellsworth Larsson's first book, "O City, Cities," was published last year by Brewer and Warren.

Alvah C. Bessie has done translations from the French: Pierre Louys, Gautier and Flaubert.

Paul Valéry is a member of the French Academy.

K. T. Young's "Ten Poems" (The Parnassus Press) is her first book, published this fall.

Kenneth White reviews for The New Republic, and is a contributor to "The American Caravan."

David C. DeJong is a Dutchman who learned English at thirteen. He is at present a student at Duke University.

Elroy Webber is a graduate of M. I. T. and has studied with LeCorbusier.

Copyright, 1931, by The Hound & Horn, Incorporated

THE HOUND & HORN is published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, by The Hound & Horn, Incorporated. Bernard Bandler II and Lincoln E. Kirstein, Editors. Alan M. Stroock, Business Manager. Publication Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Executive and Editorial Office, 10 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped return envelope. Payment will be made on publication.

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. IV, No. 2 January-March, 1931

NOTES ON E. E. CUMMINGS' LANGUAGE

IN his four books of verse, his play, and the autobiographical *Enormous Room*, Mr. Cummings has amassed a special vocabulary and has developed from it a special use of language which these notes are intended to analyse and make explicit. Critics have commonly said, when they understood Mr. Cummings' vocabulary at all, that he has enriched the language with a new idiom; had they been further interested in the uses of language, they would no doubt have said that he had added to the general sensibility of his time. Certainly his work has had many imitators. Young poets have found it easy to adopt the attitudes from which Mr. Cummings has written, just as they often adopt the superficial attitudes of Swinburne and Keats. The curious thing about Mr. Cummings' influence is that his imitators have been able to emulate as well as ape him; which is not so frequently the case with the influence of Swinburne and Keats. Mr. Cummings is a school of writing in himself; so that it is necessary to state the underlying assumptions of his mind, and of the school which he teaches, before dealing with the specific results in poetry of those assumptions.

It is possible to say that Mr. Cummings belongs to the anti-culture group; what has been called at various times vorticism, futurism, dadaism, surrealism, and so on.[1] Part of the general dogma of this group is a sentimental denial of the intelligence and the deliberate assertion that the unintelligible is the only object of significant experience. These dogmas have been defended with considerable dialectical skill, on the very practical premise that only by presenting the unintelligible as viable and actual *per se* can the culture of the *dead intelligence* (Brattle Street, the Colleges, and the Reviews) be shocked into sentience. It is argued that only by denying to the intelligence its function of discerning quality and order, can the failures of the intelligence be overcome; that if we take things as they come without remembering what has gone before or guessing what may come next, and if we accept these things at their face value, we shall know life, at least in the arts, as it really is. Nothing could be more arrogant, and more deceptively persuasive to the childish spirit, than such an attitude when held as fundamental. It appeals to the intellect which wishes to work swiftly and is in love with immediate certainty. A mind based on it accepts every fragment of experience as final and every notion as definite, yet never suffers from the delusion that it has learned anything. By an astonishing accident, enough unanimity exists among these people to permit them to agree among themselves; to permit them, even, to seem spiritually indistinguishable as they appear in public.

The central attitude of this group has developed, in its sectaries, a logical and thoroughgoing set of principles and habits. In America, for example, the cause of the lively arts has been advanced against the ancient seven; because the lively arts are necessarily immediate in appeal and utterly transitory. Thus we find in Mr. Cummings' recent verse and in his play *Him* the side show and the cabaret set up as "inevitable" frames for experience. Jazz effects, tough dialects, tough guys, slim hot queens, barkers, fairies, and so on, are made into the media and symbols of poetry. Which is proper enough in Shakespeare where such effects are used ornamentally or for pure play. But in Cummings such effects are employed as substance, as the very mainstay of the poetry. There is a continuous effort to escape the realism of the intelligence in favour of the realism of the obvious. What might be stodgy or dull because not properly worked up into poetry is replaced by the tawdry and by the fiction of the immediate.

---

[1] The reader is referred to the late numbers of the now defunct *transition* for a serial and collaborative expression of the latest form which this group has assumed: the Battle of the Word.

It is no great advantage to get rid of one set of flabby generalities if the result is merely the immersion of the sensibility in another set only superficially less flabby. The hardness of the tough guy is mostly in the novelty of the language. There is no hardness in the emotion. The poet is as far from the concrete as before. By denying the dead intelligence and putting on the heresy of unintelligence, the poet only succeeds in substituting one set of unnourished conventions for another. What survives, with a deceptive air of reality, is a surface. That the deception is often intentional hardly excuses it. The surface is meant to clothe and illuminate a real substance, but in fact it is impenetrable. We are left, after experiencing this sort of art, with the certainty that there was nothing to penetrate. The surface was perfect; the deceit was childish; and the conception was incorrigibly sentimental: all because of the dogma which made them possible.

If Mr. Cummings' tough-guy poems are excellent examples of this sentimentality, it is only natural that his other poems — those clothed in the more familiar language of the lyric — should betray even more obviously, even more perfectly, the same fault. There, in the lyric, there is no pretence at hardness of surface. We are admitted at once to the bare emotion. What is most striking, in every instance, about this emotion is the fact that, in so far as it exists at all, it is Mr. Cummings' emotion, so that our best knowledge of it must be, finally, our best guess. It is not an emotion resulting from the poem; it existed before the poem began and is a result of the poet's private life. Besides its inspiration, every element in the poem, and its final meaning as well, must be taken at face value or not at all. This is the extreme form, in poetry, of romantic egoism: whatever I experience is real and final, and whatever I say represents what I experience. Such a dogma is the natural counterpart of the denial of the intelligence.

Our interest is not in the abstract principle, but in the results of its application in poetry. Assuming that a poem should in some sense be understood, should have a meaning apart from the poet's private life, either one of two things will be true about any poem written from such an attitude as we have ascribed to Mr. Cummings. Either the poem will appear in terms so conventional that everybody will understand it — when it will be flat and no poem at all; or it will appear in language so far distorted from convention as to be inapprehensible except by lucky guess. In neither instance will the poem be genuinely complete. It will be the notes for a poem, from which might flow an infinite number of possible poems, but from which no particular poem can be certainly deduced. It is the purpose of this paper to examine a few of the more obvious types of distortion which Mr. Cummings has practiced upon language.

The question central to such a discussion will be what kind of meaning does Mr. Cummings' poetry have; what is the kind of equivalence between the language and its object. The pursuit of such a question involves us immediately in the relations between words and feelings, and the relations between the intelligence and its field in experience — all relations which are precise only in terms themselves essentially poetic — in the feeling for an image, the sense of an idiom. Such relations may only be asserted, may be judged only tentatively, only instinctively, by what seems to be the disciplined experience, but what amounts, perhaps, only to the formed taste. Here criticism is appreciation. But appreciation, even, can take measures to be certain of its grounds, and to be full should betray the constant apprehension of an end which is the necessary consequence, the proper rounding off, of just those grounds. In the examination of Mr. Cummings' writings the grounds will be the facts about the words he uses, and the end will be apprehended in the quality of the meaning his use of these words permits.

There is one attitude towards Mr. Cummings' language which has deceived those who hold it. The typographical peculiarities of his verse have caught and irritated public attention. Excessive hyphenation of single words, the use of lower case "i," the breaking of lines, the insertion of punctuation between the letters of a word, and so on, will have a possible critical importance to the textual scholarship of the future; but extensive consideration of these peculiarities to-day has very little importance, carries almost no reference to the *meaning* of the poems. Mr. Cummings' experiments in typography merely extend the theory of notation by adding to the number, *not* to the *kind*, of conventions the reader must bear in mind, and are dangerous only because since their uses cannot readily be defined, they often obscure rather than clarify the exact meaning. No doubt the continued practice of such notation would produce a set of well-ordered conventions susceptible of general use. At present the practice can only be "allowed for," recognized in the particular instance, felt, and forgotten: as the diacritical marks in the dictionary are forgotten once the sound of the word has been learned. The poem, after all, only takes wing on the page, it persists in the ear.[2]

Considering typographical peculiarities for our present purposes as either irrelevant or unaccountable, there remain the much more important peculiarities of Mr. Cummings' vocabulary itself; of the poem *after* it has been read, as it is in the mind's ear, as it is on the page only for reassurance and correction.

If a reader, sufficiently familiar with these poems not to be caught on the snag of novelty, inspects carefully any score of them, no matter how widely scattered, he will especially be struck by a sameness among them. This sameness will be in two sorts — a vagueness of image and a constant recurrence of words. Since the one depends considerably upon the other, a short list of some of Mr. Cummings' favourite words will be a good preliminary to the examination of his images. In *Tulips and Chimneys* words such as these occur frequently — thrilling, flowers, serious, absolute, sweet, unspeaking, utter, gradual, ultimate, final, serene, frail, grave, tremendous, slender, fragile, skilful, carefully, intent, young, gay, untimid, incorrigible, groping, dim, slow, certain, deliberate, strong, chiselled, subtle, tremulous, perpetual, crisp, perfect, sudden, faint, strenuous, minute, superlative, keen, ecstatic, actual, fleet, delicious, stars, enthusiastic, capable, dull, bright. In listing these as favourite words, it is meant that these words do the greater part of the work in the poems where they occur; these are the words which qualify the subject-matter of the poems, and are sometimes even the subjects themselves. Observe that none of them, taken alone, are very *concrete* words; and observe that many of them are the rather *abstract*, which is to say typical, *names* for precise qualities, but are not, and cannot be, as *originally important* words in a poem, very precise or very concrete or very abstract: they are middling words, not in themselves very much one thing or the other, and should be useful only with respect to something concrete in itself.

---

[2] It is not meant to disparage Mr. Cummings' inventions, which are often excellent, but to minimize an exaggerated contemporary interest. A full discussion of the virtues of notation may be found in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* by Laura Riding and Robert Graves (London, Heinemann, 1927), especially in Chapter III which is labelled: "William Shakespeare and E. E. Cummings: A study in original punctuation and spelling." Their point is made by printing sonnet 129 in its original notation beside a modern version; the point being that Shakespeare knew what he was doing and that his editors did not.

If we take Mr. Cummings' most favoured word "flower" and inspect the uses to which he puts it, we should have some sort of key to the kind of poetry he writes. In *Tulips and Chimneys* the word "flower" turns up, to a casual count, forty-eight times, and in *&*, a much smaller volume, twenty-one times. We have among others the following: smile like a flower; riverly as a flower; steeped in burning flowers; last flower; lipping flowers; more silently than a flower; snow flower; world flower; softer than flowers; forehead a flight of flowers; feet are flowers in vases; air is deep with flowers; slow supple flower of beauty; flower-terrible; flower of thy mouth; stars and flowers; mouth a new flower; flower of silence; god's flowers; flowers of reminding; dissonant flowers; flower-stricken air; Sunday flower; tremendous flower; speaking flower; flowers of kiss; futile flowers, etc., etc. Besides the general term there is a quantity of lilies and roses, and a good assortment of daisies, pansies, buttercups, violets and chrysanthemums. There are also many examples of such associated words as "petals" and "blooms" and "blossoms," which, since they are similarly used, may be taken as alternative to flowers.

Now it is evident that this word must attract Mr. Cummings' mind very much; it must contain for him an almost unlimited variety and extent of meaning; as the mystic says god, or at least as the incomplete mystic repeats the name of god to every occasion of his soul, Mr. Cummings in some of his poems says flower. The question is, whether or not the reader can possibly have shared the experience which Mr. Cummings has had of the word; whether or not it is possible to discern, after any amount of effort, the precise impact which Mr. Cummings undoubtedly feels upon his whole experience when he uses the word. "Flower" like every other word not specifically the expression of a logical relation, began life as a metaphor, as a leap from feeling to feeling, as a bridge in the imagination to give meaning to both those feelings. Presumably, the amount of meaning possible to the word is increased with each use, but only the meaning *possible.* Actually, in practice, a very different process goes on. Since people are occupied mostly with communication and argument and conversation, with the erection of discursive relationships, words are commonly spoken and written with the *least* possible meaning preserved, instead of the most. History is taken for granted, ignored, or denied. Only the outsides of words, so to speak, are used; and doubtless the outsides of words are all that the discursive intellect needs. But when a word is used in a poem it should be the sum of all its appropriate history made concrete and particular in the individual context; and in poetry all words act *as if* they were so used, because the only kind of meaning poetry can have requires that all its words resume their full life: the full life being modified and made unique by the *qualifications* the words perform one upon the other in the poem. Thus even a very bad poem may seem good to its author, when the author is not an acute critic and believes that there is life in his words merely because there was life (and a very different sort of life, truly) in the feelings which they represent. An author should remember, with the Indians, that the reality of a word is anterior to, and greater than, his use of it can ever be; that there is a perfection to the feelings in words to which his mind cannot hope to attain, but that his chief labour will be toward the approximation of that perfection.

We sometimes speak of a poet as a master of his words, and we sometimes say that a man's poetry has been run away with by words — meaning that he has not mastered his words but has been overpowered by his peculiar experience of certain among them. Both these notions are commonly improper, because they represent misconceptions of the nature of poetry in so far as they lay any stress upon originality, or the lack of it, in the poet's use of words. The only mastery possible to the poet consists in that entire submission to his words which is perfect knowledge. The only originality of which the poet is properly capable will be in the choice of order, and even this choice is largely a process of discovery rather than of origination. As for words running away with a poet or a poem, it would be more accurate to say that the poet's *ideas* had run away with him than his words.

This is precisely what has occurred to Mr. Cummings in his use of the word "flower" as a maid of all work. The word has become an idea, and in the process has been deprived of its history, its qualities, and its meaning. An idea, the intellectual pin upon which a thought is hung, is not transmissible in poetry as an important element in the poem and ought only to be employed to pass over, with the greatest possible velocity, the area of the uninteresting (what the poet was not interested in). That is, in a poem whose chief intent was the notation of character and yet required a descriptive setting might well use for the description such vague words as space and time, but could not without making them concrete use such words as goodness or nobleness without the risk of flatness. In Mr. Cummings' poetry we find the contrary; the word "flower," because of the originality with which he conceives it, becomes an idea and is used to represent the most interesting and most important aspect of his poem. Hence the centre of the poem is permanently abstract and unknowable for the reader, and remains altogether without qualifications and concreteness. It is not the mere frequency of use that deadens the word flower into an idea; it is the kind of thought which each use illustrates in common. By seldom saying *what* flower, by seldom relating immitigably the abstract word to a specific experience, the content of the word vanishes; it has no inner mystery, only an impenetrable surface.

This is the defect, the essential deceit, we were trying to define. Without questioning Mr. Cummings, or any poet, as to sincerity (which is a personal attitude, irrelevant to the poetry considered) it is possible to say that when in any poem the important words are forced by their use to remain impenetrable, when they can be made to surrender nothing actually to the senses — then the poem is defective and the poet's words have so far deceived him as to become ideas merely.[3] Mr. Cummings is not so much writing poetry, as he is dreaming, idly ringing the changes of his reveries.

---

[3] It should be confessed that for all those persons who regard poetry only as a

Perhaps a small divagation may make clearer the relation of these remarks to Mr. Cummings' poems. Any poetry which does not consider itself as much of an art and having the same responsibilities to the consumer as the arts of silversmithing or cobbling shoes — any such poetry is likely to do little more than rehearse a waking dream. Dreams are everywhere ominous and full of meaning; and why should they not be? They hold the images of the secret self, and to the initiate dreamer betray the nerve of life at every turn, not through any effort to do so, or because of any inherited regimen, but simply because they cannot help it. Dreams are like that — to the dreamer the maximal limit of experience. As it happens, dreams employ words and pictorial images to fill out their flux with a veil of substance. Pictures are natural to everyone, and words, because they are prevalent, seem common and inherently sensible. Hence, both picture and word, and then with a little stretching of the fancy the substance of the dream itself, seem expressible just as they occur — as things created, as the very flux of life. Mr. Cummings' poems are often nothing more than the report of just such dreams. He believes he knows what he knows, and no doubt he does. But he also believes, apparently, that the words which he encourages most vividly to mind are those most precisely fitted to put his poem on paper. He transfers the indubitable magic of his private musings from the cell of his mind, where it is honest incantation, to the realm of

---

medium of communication, these remarks are quite vitiated. What is communicated had best remain as abstract as possible, dealing with the concrete as typical only; then "meaning" will be found to reside most clearly in the realm of ideas, and everything will be given as of equal import. But here poetry is regarded not at all as communication but as expression, as statement, as presentation of experience, and the emphasis will be on what is made known concretely. The question is not what one shares with the poet, but what one knows in the poem.

poetry. Here he forgets that poetry, so far as it takes a permanent form, is written and is meant to be read, and that it cannot be a mere private musing. Merely because his private fancy furnishes his liveliest images, is the worst reason for assuming that this private fancy will be approximately experienced by the reader or even indicated on the printed page.

But it is unfair to limit this description to Mr. Cummings; indeed, so limited, it is not even a description of Mr. Cummings. Take the Oxford Book of English Verse, or any anthology of poems equally well known, and turn from the poems printed therein of such widely separated poets as Surrey, Crashaw, Marvell, Burns, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Swinburne, to the collected works of these poets respectively. Does not the description of Mr. Cummings' mind at work given above apply nearly as well to the bulk of this poetry as to that of Mr. Cummings, at least on the senses' first immersion? The anthology poems being well known are conceived to be understood, to be definitely intelligible, and to have, without inspection, a precise meaning. The descent upon the collected poems of all or of any one of these authors is by and large a descent into tenuity. Most of their work, most of any poet's work, with half a dozen exceptions, is tenuous and vague, private exercises or public playthings of a soul in verse. So far as he is able, the reader struggles to reach the concrete, the solid, the definite; he must have these qualities, or their counterparts among the realm of the spirit, before he can understand what he reads. To translate such qualities from the realm of his private experience to the conventional forms of poetry is the problem of the poet; and the problem of the reader, likewise, is to come well equipped with the talent and the taste for discerning the meaning of those conventions as they particularly occur. Neither the poet's casual language nor the reader's casual interlocution is likely to be much help. There must be a ground common but exterior to each: that is the poem. The best poems take the best but not always the hardest reading; and no doubt it is so with the writing. Certainly, in neither case are dreams or simple reveries enough. Dreams are natural and are minatory or portentous; but except when by accident they fall into forms that fit the intelligence, they never negotiate the miracle of meaning between the poet and the poem, the poem and the reader.

Most poetry fails of this negotiation, and it is sometimes assumed that the negotiation was never meant, by the poet, to be made. For the poet, private expression is said to be enough; for the reader, the agitation of the senses, the perception of verbal beauty, the mere sense of stirring life in the words, are supposed sufficient. If this defence had a true premise — if the poet did express himself to his private satisfaction — it would be unanswerable; and to many it is so. But I think the case is different, and this is the real charge against Mr. Cummings, the poet does not ever express himself privately. The mind cannot understand, cannot properly know its own musings until those musings take some sort of conventional form. Properly speaking a poet, or any man, cannot be adequate to himself in terms of himself. True consciousness and true expression of consciousness must be external to the blind seat of consciousness — man as a sensorium. Even a simple image must be fitted among other images, and conned with them, before it is understood. That is, it must take a form in language which is highly traditional and conventional. The genius of the poet is to make the convention apparently disappear into the use to which he puts it.

Mr. Cummings and the group with which he is here roughly associated, the anti-culture or anti-intelligence group, persists to the contrary. Because experience is fragmentary as it strikes the consciousness it is thought to be essentially discontinuous and therefore essentially unintelligible except in the fragmentary form in which it occurred. They credit the words they use with immaculate conception and there hold them unquestionable. A poem, because it happens, must mean something and mean it without relation to anything but the private experience which inspired it. Certainly it means something, but not a poem; it means that something exciting happened to the writer and that a mystery is happening to the reader. The fallacy is double: they believe in the inexorable significance of the unique experience; and they have discarded the only method of making the unique experience into a poem — the conventions of the intelligence. As a matter of fact they do not write without conventions, but being ignorant of what they use, they resort most commonly to their own inefficient or superficial conventions — such as Mr. Cummings' flower and doll. The effect is convention without substance; the unique experience becomes a rhetorical assurance.

If we examine next, for the sake of the greatest possible contrast, one of the "tough" poems in *Is 5*, we will find a similar breach with the concrete. The use of vague words like "flower" in the lyrical poems as unexpanded similes, is no more an example of sentimental egoism than the use of vague conventions about villains. The distortion differs in terms but is essentially identical.

Sometimes the surface of the poem is so well constructed that the distortion is hard to discover. Intensity of process occasionally triumphs over the subject. Less frequently the subject itself is conceived directly and takes naturally the terms which the language supplies. The poem numbered One-XII in *Is 5* is an example in so far as the sentimental frame does not obscure the process.

> now dis "daughter" uv eve (who aint precisely slim) sim
> ply don't know duh meanin uv duh woid sin in
> not disagreeable contras tuh dat not exactly fat
> "father" (adjustin his robe) who now puts on his flat hat.

It is to be noted in this epigram, that there is no inexorable reason for either the dialect or the lapses from it into straight English. No one in particular is speaking, unless it be Mr. Cummings slumming in morals along with he-men and lady social workers, and taking it for granted that the dialect and the really refined language which the dialect exercises together give a setting. There are many other poems in *Is 5*, more sentimental and less successful, where the realism is of a more obvious sort; not having reference to an ideal so much as to a kind of scientific reality. That is, there is an effort to ground an emotion, or the facts which make the emotion, in the style of the character to whom the emotion happens. It is the reporter, the man with the good ear for spoken rhythms, who writes out of memory. The war poems and the poem about Bill and his chip (One XVI) are examples. Style in this sense (something laid on) is only an attribute; is not the man; is not the character. And when it is substituted for character, it is likely to be sentimental and melodramatic. That is, the emotion which is named in the poem (by one of its attributes) is in excess of its established source (that same attribute). There is a certain immediate protection afforded to this insufficiency by the surface toughness, by the convention of burlesque; as if by mocking oneself one made sure there was something to mock. It is a kind of trickery resulting from eager but lazy senses; where the sensation itself is an excess, and appears to have done all the work of intuition and intelligence; where sensation seems expert without incorporation into experience. As if sensation could be anything more than the idea of sensation, so far as poetry goes, without being attached to some central body of experience, genuinely understood and *formed* in the mind.

The intrusion of science into art always results in a sentimental realism and always obfuscates form when that science is not kept subordinate to the qualitative experience of the senses — as witness the run of sociological novels. The analogues of science, where conventions are made to do the work of feeling instead of crowning it, are even more dangerous. Mr. Cummings' tough guy and his hard-boiled dialects are such analogues.

Mr. Cummings has a fine talent for using familiar, even almost dead words, in such a context as to make them suddenly impervious to every ordinary sense; they become unable to speak, but with a great air of being bursting with something very important and precise to say. "The bigness of cannon is *skilful* . . . enormous rhythm of *absurdity* . . . *slimness* of *evenslicing* eyes are chisels . . . electric Distinct face haughtily vital *clinched* in a swoon of *synopsis* . . . my friend's being continually whittles *keen* careful futile *flowers*," etc. With the possible exception of the compound *evenslicing* the italicized words are all ordinary words; all in normal contexts have a variety of meanings both connotative and denotative; the particular context being such as to indicate a particular meaning, to establish precisely a feeling, a sensation or a relation.

Mr. Cummings' contexts are employed to an opposite purpose in so far as they wipe out altogether the history of the word, its past associations and general character. To seize Mr. Cummings' meaning there is only the free and *uninstructed* intuition. Something precise is no doubt intended; the warrant for the belief is in the almost violent isolation into which the words are thrown; but that precision can seldom, by this method, become any more than just that "something precise." The reality, the event, the feeling, which we will allow Mr. Cummings has in mind, is not sensibly in the word. It is one thing for meaning to be difficult, or abstruse — hidden in its heart, that is. "Absent thee from *felicity* a while," Blake's "Time is the *mercy* of eternity" are reasonable examples; there the mystery is inside the words. In Mr. Cummings' words the mystery flies in the face, is on the surface; because there is no inside, no realm of possibility, of essence.

The general movement of Mr. Cummings' language is away from communicable precision. If it be argued that the particular use of one of the italicized words above merely makes that word unique, the retort is that such uniqueness is too perfect, is sterile. If by removing the general sense of a word the special sense is apotheosized, it is only so at the expense of the general sense itself. The destruction of the general sense of a word results in the loss of that word's individuality; for in practice the character of a word (which is its sense) is manifest only in good society, and meaning is distinguished only by conventional association. Mr. Cummings' use of words results in a large number of conventions, but these conventions do not permeate the words themselves, do not modify their souls or change their fates; they cannot be adopted by the reader because they cannot be essentially understood. They should rather be called inventions.

If we take a paragraph from the poem beginning on page thirty in *Is 5*, we will discover another terminus of the emotional habit of mind which produced the emphasis on the word "flower" in *Tulips and Chimneys.*

the Bar. tinking luscious jugs dint of ripe silver with warmlyish wetflat splurging smells waltz the glush of squirting taps plus slush of foam knocked off and a faint piddle-of-drops she says I ploc spittle what the lands thaz me kin in no sir hopping sawdust you kiddo he's a palping wreaths of badly Yep cigars who jim him why gluey grins topple together eyes pout gestures stickily point made glints squinting who's a wink bum-nothing and money fuzzily mouths take big wobbly foot-steps every goggle cent of it get out ears dribbles soft right old feller belch the chap hic summore eh chuckles skulch.

Now the point is that the effect of this whole paragraph has much in common with the effect of the word "flower." It is a flower disintegrated, and the parts are not component; so that by presenting an analysis of his image Mr. Cummings has not let us into its secret: the analysis is not a true analysis, because it exhibits, finally, what are still only the results, not the grounds, of his private conventions, his personal emotions. It is indubitable that the words are alive; they jostle, even overturn, the reader in the assurance of their vitality; but the notion of what their true vitality is remains Mr. Cummings' very own. The words remain emotive. They have a gusty air of being something, but they defeat themselves in the effort to say what, and come at last to a bad end, all fallen in a heap.

The easiest *explanation* of the passage would be to say that each separate little collection of words in it is a note for an image; an abstraction, very keen and lively in Mr. Cummings' mind, of something very precise and concrete. Some of the words seem like a painter's notes, some a philologist's. But they are all, as they are presented, notes, abstractions, ideas — with their concrete objects unknown — except to the most arbitrary guess. The guess must be arbitrary because of the quantity, not the quality, of the words employed. Mr. Cummings is not here overworking the individual words, but by heaping so many of them together he destroys their individuality. Meaning really residual in the word is not exhausted, is not even touched; it must remain abstract and only an emotional substitute for it can be caught. The interesting fact about emotional substitutes in poetry, as elsewhere, is their thinness, and the inadequacy resulting from the thinness. The thinness is compulsory because they can, so far as the poem is concerned, exist only as a surface; they cannot possess tentacular roots reaching into, and feeding on, feelings, because the feelings do not exist, are only present by legerdemain. Genuine emotion in poetry perhaps does not *exist* at all; though it is none the less real for that, because a genuine emotion does not need the warrant of existence: it is the necessary result, in the mind, of a convention of feelings: like the notion of divine grace.

In *Tulips and Chimneys* (p. 109) there is a poem whose first and last lines supply an excellent opposition of proper and improper distortion of language.

> the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls . . .
>   the
> moon rattles like a fragment of angry candy.

In the context the word "soul" has the element of surprise which is surprise at *justness*, at *aptness;* it fits in and finishes off the notion of the line. "Furnished souls" is a good, if slight, conceit; and there is no trouble for the reader who wishes to know what the line means: he has merely to *extend* his knowledge slightly, just as Mr. Cummings merely extended the sense of his language slightly by releasing his particular words in this particular order. The whole work that the poet here demands of his reader is pretty well defined. The reader does not have to *guess;* he is enabled to *know.* The reader is not collecting data, he is aware of a meaning.

It would be unfair not to quote the context of the second line.

> . . . the Cambridge ladies do not care, above
> Cambridge if sometimes in its box of
> sky lavender and cornerless, the
> moon rattles like a fragment of angry candy.

We can say that Mr. Cummings is putting beauty next to the tawdry; juxtaposing the dead with the live; or that he is being sentimentally philosophical in verse — that is, releasing from inadequate sources something intended to be an emotion.[4]

We can go on illustrating Mr. Cummings probable intentions almost infinitely. What Mr. Cummings likes or admires, what he holds dear in life, he very commonly calls flowers, or dolls, or candy — terms with which he is astonishingly generous; as if he thought by making his terms general enough their vagueness could not matter, and never noticed that the words so used enervate themselves in a kind of hardened instinct. We can understand what Mr. Cummings intended by "moon" and "candy" but in the process of understanding, the meaning of the words themselves disappears. The thrill of the association of "rattles" with "moon" and "angry" with "candy" becomes useless as a guide.

---

[4] That is, as the most common form of sentimentality is the use of emotion in *excess* of its impetus in the feelings, here we have an example of emotion which fails by a great deal to *come up* to its impetus. It is a very different thing from understatement, where the implications are always definite and where successful disarming.

"Rattles" and "angry" can only be continued in the meaning of the line if the reader supplies them with a force, a definiteness of suggestion, with which Mr. Cummings has not endowed them.

The distortion is here not a release of observation so keen that commonplace language would not hold it; it is not the presentation of a vision so complete that words must lose their normal meanings in order to suggest it. It is, on the contrary, the distortion of the commonplace itself; and the difficulty about a commonplace is that it cannot be known, it has no character, no fate, and no essence. It is a substitute for these.

True meaning (which is here to say knowledge) can only exist where some contact, however remote, is preserved between the language, forms, or symbols in which it is given and something concrete, individual, or sensual which inspired it; and the degree in which the meaning is seized will depend on the degree in which the particular concreteness is realized. Thus the technique of "meaning" will employ distortion only in so far as the sense of this concreteness is promoted by it. When contrast and contradiction disturb the ultimate precision of the senses the distortion involved is inappropriate and destructive. Mr. Cummings' line about the moon and candy does not weld a contradiction, does not identify a substance by a thrill of novel association. It leaves the reader at a loss; where it is impossible to *know*, after any amount of effort and good will, what the words mean. If it be argued that Mr. Cummings was not interested in meaning then Mr. Cummings is not a serious poet, is a mere collector of sensations, and can be of very little value to us. And to defend Mr. Cummings on the ground that he is in the pretty good company of Swinburne, Crashaw, and Victor Hugo, is partly to ignore the fact that by the same argument all four also enjoy the companionship of Mr. Guest. Such defence would show a very poor knowledge of the verses of Mr. Cummings, who is nothing if not serious in the attempt to exhibit precise knowledge. His interest in words and in their real meaning is probably greater than that of most poets of similar dimensions. He has consciously stretched syntax, word order, and meaning in just the effort to expand knowledge in poetry; and his failure is because he has gone too far, has lost sight of meaning altogether — and because, perhaps, the experience which he attempts to translate into poetry remained always personal to him and was never known objectively as itself. By his eagerness Mr. Cummings' relation to language has become confused; he has put down what has meant much to him and can mean little to us, because for us it is not put down — is only indicated, only possibly there. The freshness and depth of his private experience is not denied; but it is certain that, so far as its meaning goes, in the poetry into which he translated it, sentimentality, empty convention, and commonplace rule. In short, Mr. Cummings' poetry ends in ideas *about* things.

When Mr. Cummings resorts to language for the *thrill* that words may be made to give, when he allows his thrill to appear as an equivalent for concrete meaning, he is often more successful than when he is engaged more ambitiously. This is true of poets like Swinburne and Poe, Shelley and the early Marlowe: where the first pair depended almost as much upon *thrill* as Mr. Cummings in those poems where they made use of it at all, and where the second pair, particularly Marlowe, used their thrills more appropriately as ornament: where all four were most successful in their less ambitious works, though perhaps not as interesting. Likewise, to-day, there is the example of Archibald MacLeish, in whose recent *Hamlet* the best lines are those that thrill and do nothing more. So that at least in general opinion Mr. Cummings is in this respect not in bad company. But if an examination of thrill be made, whether in Mr. Cummings' verse or in that of others, it will be shown that the use of thrill has at heart the same sentimental impenetrability that defeats the possibility of meaning elsewhere. Only here, in the realm of thrill, the practice is comparatively less illegitimate. Thrill, by itself, or in its proper place, is an exceedingly important element in any poem: it is the circulation of its blood, the *quickness* of life, by which we know it, when there is anything in it to know, most intimately. To use a word for its thrill, is to resurrect it from the dead; it is the incarnation of life in consciousness; it is movement.[5]

But what Mr. Cummings does, when he is using language as thrill, is not to resurrect a word from the dead: he more often produces an apparition, in itself startling and even ominous, but still only a ghost: it is all a thrill, and what it is that thrilled us cannot be determined. For example in *XLI Poems*, the following phrases depend considerably for their effect upon the thrill that is in them: "Prisms of sharp *mind;* where strange birds *purr;* into the *smiling* sky *tense* with *blending;*

---

[5] Cf. Owen Barfield's *Poetic Diction* (London, Faber and Gwyer, 1928), page 202. "For what is absolutely necessary to the present existence of poetry? Movement. The wisdom which she has imparted may remain for a time at rest, but she herself will always be found to have gone forward to where there is life, and therefore movement, *now.* And we have seen that the experience of aesthetic pleasure betrays the real presence of movement. . . . But without the continued existence of poetry, without a steady influx of new meaning into language, even the knowledge and wisdom which poetry herself has given in the past must wither away into a species of mechanical calculation. Great poetry is the progressive incarnation of life in consciousness." That is we must know what thrills us; else being merely thrilled we are left gasping and aghast, like the little girl on the roller-coaster.

ways cloaked with *renewal;* sinuous riot; *steeped* with burning flowers; little kittens who are called *spring;* electric Distinct face haughtily vital clinched in a *swoon* of synopsis; unreal *precise* intrinsic fragment of actuality; an orchid whose *velocity* is *sculptural;* scythe takes *crisply* the *whim* of thy *smoothness;* perpendicular *taste;* wet stars, etc., etc. (The italics are mine.)

Take especially the phrase, "scythe takes *crisply* the *whim* of thy *smoothness.*" We know in the poem that it is the scythe of death and that it is youth and beauty (in connection with love) that is to be cut off. So much is familiar, is very conventional; and so the conventional or dead emotion is placed before us; the educated reader receives it and reacts to it without a whimper. But Mr. Cummings must not have been content with presenting the conventional emotion in its conventional form; he felt bound to enliven it with metaphor, with overtones of the senses and the spirit: so that he substituted for the direct statement a rather indirect image combining three unusually sensed words for the sake of the *thrill* the special combination might afford. As the phrase stands there is no precision in it. There is a great suggestion of precision about it — like men going off to war; but precisely *what* is left for the reader to guess, to supply from his own heart. By themselves *whim* and *smoothness* are abstract quality words; and in order for them to escape the tensity, the dislocated strain, of abstractness and gain the intensity, the firm disposition, of concrete meaning, they should demand a particular reference.

Smoothness is probably the smoothness of the body and is used here as a kind of metonomy; but it may be pure metaphor and represent what is really to die — the spirit — taken in its physical terms; or it may be that all that is to be understood is a pure tautology. And so on. Even with this possible variety of reference, *smoothness* would not be very objectionable, were it the only word in the phrase used in this way, or were the other words used to clarify the *smoothness*. But we have also the noun *whim* bearing directly on *smoothness* and the adverb *crisply* which while it directly modifies *takes*, really controls the entire phrase. Taken seriously *whim*, with reference to the smoothness of either the body or the spirit or the love it inspires, is to say the least a light word; one might almost say a "metrical" word, introduced to stretch the measure, or because the author liked the sound of it, or enjoyed whimsy. It diminishes without limiting the possibilities of *smoothness*. Because it is here, in the phrase, it is inseparable from the phrase's notion of smoothness; yet instead of assisting, tends to prevent what that notion of smoothness is from being divulged.

Crisply is even more difficult to account for; associated with a scythe it perhaps brings to mind the sound of a scythe in a hayfield, which is surely not the reference here intended; it would be very difficult for such a crispness to associate itself with death, which the scythe represents, or *whim*, or *smoothness* in either the spiritual or fleshly sense. If it implies merely a cleanness, a swiftness of motion in the apparition of death, some other word would have seemed better chosen. If this analysis be correct, the three words are unalterably combined by the force of *crisply* in such a way as to defeat the only possible sense their *thrilling* use would have had. They are, so to speak, only the notions of themselves and those selves must remain forever unknown. All we are left with in such a phrase as this is the strangeness which struck us on our first encounter; and the only difference is that the strangeness is the more intensified the more we prolong the examination. This is another test of poetry: whether we understand the *strangeness* of a poem or not.[6]

As it happens there is an exquisite example of the proper use of this strangeness, this thrill, in another poem of Mr. Cummings: where he speaks of a cathedral before whose face "the streets turn *young* with rain." While there might be some question as to whether the use of *young* presents the only adequate image, there is certainly no question at all that the phrase is entirely successful: that is, the suggestive feeling in *young* makes the juncture, the emotional conjugation, of streets and rain transparent and perfect. This may be so because there is no element of essential contradiction, in the terms of feeling, between the emotional word *young* and the factual words *streets* and *rain;* or because, positively, what happens to the context by the insertion of *young* is, by a necessary leap of the imagination, something qualified. *Young* may be as abstract a word by itself, as purely relative and notional a word, as any other; but here it is brought into the concrete, is fixed there in a proper habitation. Just because reference is not commonly made either to young streets or young rain, the combination here effected is the more appropriate. The surprise, the contrast, which lend force to the phrase, do not exist in the poem; but exist, if at all, rather in the mind of the reader who did not forsee the slight stretch of his sensibility that the phrase requires — which the phrase not only requires, but necessitates. This, then, is a *strangeness* understood by its own viableness. No preliminary agreement of taste, or contract of symbols, was necessary.

---

[6] *Poetic Diction*, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–8: "It (strangeness) is not synonymous with wonder; for wonder is our reaction to things which we are conscious of not quite understanding, or at any rate of understanding less than we had thought. The element of strangeness in beauty has the contrary effect. It arises from contact with a different kind of *consciousness* from our own, different, yet not so remote that we cannot partly share it, as indeed, in such a connexion, the mere word 'contact' implies. Strangeness, in fact, arouses wonder when we do not understand; aesthetic imagination when we do."

The point is that Mr. Cummings did not here attempt the impossible, he merely stretched the probable. The business of the poet who deals largely with tactual and visual images, as Mr. Cummings does, for the meat of his work, is to escape the prison of his private mind; to use in his poem as little as possible of the experience that happened to him personally, and on the other hand to employ as much as possible of that experience as it is data.

It is idle for a critic to make the familiar statement that the mind of the writer is his work, or that "the style is the man," when by mind and man is meant the private experience of the author. So far as, in this sense, the mind *is* the work, or the style *is* the man, we can understand the work or the style only through an accidental unanimity; and what we understand is likely to be very thin — perhaps only the terms of understanding. For the author himself, in such circumstances, can have understood very little more. He has been pursuing the impossible, when the probable was right at hand; he has been transcending his experience instead of submitting to it. And this is just what Mr. Cummings does in the phrases quoted above.

It would be ungracious to suppose that as a poet "a swoon of synopsis" did not represent to Mr. Cummings a very definite and very suggestive image. But to assent to that image would be a kind of *tour de force;* the application of such assent would imply that because the words appear, and being words contain notions, they must in this particular instance exhibit the undeniable sign of interior feeling. The proper process of poetry designs exactly what the reader will perceive; that is what is meant when a word is said to be inevitable or *juste*. But this exactness of perception can only come about when there is an extreme fidelity on the part of the poet to his words as living things; which he can discover and control — which he must learn, and nourish, and stretch; but which he cannot invent. This unanimity in our possible experience of words implies that the only unanimity which the reader can feel in what the poet represents must be likewise exterior to the poet; must be somehow both anterior and posterior to the poet's own experience. The poet's mind, perhaps, is what he is outside himself with; is what he has learned; is what he knows: it is also what the reader knows. So long as he is content to remain in his private mind, he is unknowable, impenetrable, and sentimental. All his words perhaps must thrill us, because we cannot know them in the very degree that we sympathize with them. But the best thrills are those we have without knowing it.

This essay has proceeded so far on the explicit assumption that the poems of Mr. Cummings are unintelligible, and that no amount of effort on the part of the reader can make them less so. We began by connecting Mr. Cummings to two schools, or groups, which are much the same essentially — the anti-culture group which denies the intelligence, and the group, not limited to writers, of which the essential attitude is most easily defined as sentimental egoism or romantic idealism. Where these schools are most obviously identical is in the poetry they nourish: the avowed interest is the relentless pursuit of the actual in terms of the immediate as the immediate is given, without overt criticism, to the ego. Unintelligibility is a necessary consequence of such a pursuit, if by the intelligible we mean something concrete, qualified, permanent, and public. Poetry, if we understand it, is not in immediacy at all. It is not given to the senses or to the free intuition. Thus, when poetry is written as if its substance were immediate and given, we have as a result a distorted sensibility and a violent inner confusion. We have, if the poet follows his principles, something abstract, vague, impermanent, and essentially private. When every sensation and every word is taken as final and perfect, the substance which sensations report and for which words must stand remain inexplicable. We can understand only by accident.

Of course there is another side to the matter. In a sense anyone can understand Mr. Cummings and his kind by the mere assertion that he does understand. Nothing else is needed but a little natural sympathy and a certain aptness for the resumption of a childish sensibility. In much the same way we understand a stranger's grief — by setting up a private and less painful simulacrum. If we take the most sentimental and romantic writers as they come, there will be always about their works an excited freshness, the rush of sensation and intuition, all the ominous glow of immediacy. They will be eagerly at home in the mystery of life. Adroitness, expertness, readiness for any experience, will enlighten their activities even where they most miserably fail. They are all actors, ready to take any part, for they put themselves, and nothing else, into every part they play. Commonly their real success will depend on the familiarity of the moments into which they sink themselves; they will depend on convention more than others, because they have nothing else to depend on.

So with the poetry of Mr. Cummings we might be altogether contented and pleased, were he himself content with the measure of his actual performance. But no poetry is so pretentious. No poetry ever claimed to mean more; and in making this claim it cannot avoid submitting itself, disastrously, to the criticism of the intelligence. So soon as we take it seriously, trying to discover what it really says about human destiny and the terms of love and death, we see how little material there is in this poetry except the assurance, made with continuous gusto, that the material exists. We look at the poetry. Sometimes one word, in itself vague and cloudy, is made to take on the work of an entire philosophy — like flower. Sometimes words pile themselves up blindly, each defeating the purport of the others. No feeling is ever defined. No emotion betrays a structure. Experience is its own phantoms, and flows willy-nilly. With the reality of experience the reality of language is lost. No metaphor crosses the bridge of tautology, and every simile is unexpanded. All the "thought" is metonomy, yet the substance is never assigned; so in the end we have only the thrill of substance.

Such an art when it pretends to measure life is essentially vicarious; it is a substitute for something that never was — like a tin soldier, or Peter Pan. It has all the flourish of life and every sentimental sincerity. Taken for what it is, it is charming and even instructive. Taken solemnly, as it is meant to be, the distortion by which it exists is too much for it, and it seems a kind of baby-talk.

R. P. Blackmur

THE VARIOUS TREE

I

FIRST SONG

Pompeios juvenes Asia atque Europa,
sed ipsum terra tegit Libyae.

SO spoke the bone:
Thine archives
are this sand: be meek of earth:
Thy hands
be musical among her fruits, her pears:
Keep keep
thy path — thine ways of seas' collapse
as sure as sand: suffer the land
as water:
Keep most (thy heart)
the yield of him
who carries harvests in an empty hand:
Oh let thy step
be single — let thy day
suffer thy brief step straightway
from a grain of earth to grain
nor see them else but plane — not peaked
or chasmed, cracked or spaced apart
for even garment's hem to sag
The
measure of a thought is at its end:
hold thy tongue singly:
Speak of thy day
thine self as plain to see
thee as these bones:

As thou art brief
so be it:
be

II

ADDRESS TO EARTH

Rally the scattered causes, and that line
Which nature twists, be able to untwine.

O EARTH —
O Earth Earth Earth:
The seasons
shift like smoke about the tree —
the leaf anew —
the new laid crisp at twist of wind
upon the ground

Sound sound the leaves:
I'll hear them speak

Sound out thy leaves, Earth
Earth, I'll hear —
nor speak this grove a forest where
we huddle thus to weave our grief
bent to thy seasons, Earth, thy wintry yews
thy birches filled with birds who leaf
unseasoned trees we dare not shape our seasonable
griefs to but must weave
heart still in season's leafage not the sound
trees filled with birds make — nor spill
one syllable of their unseasonable tree
upon the ground

Sound sound out thy leaves, Earth
Earth, I'll hear them —
Speak from the new leaf —
Speak me the tongue of one hung still in winter —
Speak with trees —
I'll hear thee:
Speak —
I am attentive to thee
Leaf . . .

2

O Earth:
I'll set the scene thus thus — I'll
name the place — I'll have
the earth veined with such rivers
set the hills between in a green
autumnal air gone slowly gold — I'll name
grained earth a sleep and I a dream
moving across the hills and by the ferned
banks, the sea's edge treed with sound
I'll
set the earth so — I'll fix it to
this thought, *Thou art* — I'll
cast about me mountains or I'll play
out the scene in Libya, show the wharves
my gestures, tell the tree-mists risen from the sea's
plain my voice, set echoes free of it
to fret their leaves

I'll roar in might
insist to quietude, in yellow evenings caged in rain—
persist to morning what the night
was broached

Quiet of impatient ends
(one leaf
one season drinking deep of earth
to speak a frosted leaf)
I'll speak
speak — but beseech not — no
nor in kind unkindness' roar pay back
to roared unkindness, — pity
to pity's plea —

I'll be contrary
to the schemes of leaves
crisping the tree — be in minuteness
vast — in peace, wild thunderer —
I'll speak, I'll
broach myself to thee in thy day, thy
sleep — be meaning of dream that haunts
the waked brain, be word, be presence —
yes —
the presence —

I'll hound — yes, hound
thy mountains — crack, crag and steep
uneagled peak —
I'll hound the field, tight on the
leash, scare up those easy
scavengers the crows, that fields call, fallen
fallow —

Oh, I'll haunt you
Earth
I'll hound, Earth Earth
I'll tease thee, Earth

I'll stare thee down from windows
and thou makest trickery with leaves
where was a desert — when thou makest spring anew
to catch my heart, my feet, and tease
me along with flowers to the worm:
I'll be
in flowers as it were in spears

Show me thy leaves'
fall: Should I fall?
. . . yet yet and yet —
when thou hast turned toward winter (yet yet
and yet)
and stand yet at the portal in a leaf
I'll be beneath that last tree's last leaf
to see thy passage —
Oh I'll be seen of thee still
Season, at the last
although thou paintest mine eye with many ends — my path
with many-millioned cities like the grass

3

So, Answerer-with-leaves, -with-roses:

Know
I'll leave unsigned thy sleep's bright tale
nor move panoplied of untoward ends
in fictive scenes of vague intent —
victim, beseiged
fleet-footed, lashed-in-of-winter, chaser-after-leaves
I'll not be —
No I'll bide

Try me with season's tricks —
trap out the trees —
scourge me, flail —
be live
wildness in tangled vales —
test me with birds —
I'll stand, I'll stay there yet
when even birds turn on the wind's edge, hinge
from view, and it is winter —

Scold me with tides —
show wide in the reeds the keel's last slivers
the gauds brought out of tombs
the weaved stuffs saved out for shrouds, not
traded in new isles —
Show me the sea
turned juggler of ends, of men's
eyes fixed to mist for the keen ledge
the strip of sand —

Mark me the summer's
pale, defy
me with wind —

I'll have a heart
in wind as in still leaves —
and in the wind
as mild

O Earth:
I'll not be blind by half, cajoled by leaves
to dream on leafing, dream still the closed eye's sleep
with eye's wide stare, be tricked by birds

I'll press
thy laughter back, Earth, back
I'll brace
thy smile from me
I'll not be guiled
from thy shards, thy shells, thy scythe-sharp
stubble, thy grinding sands, thine heights'
unkindness
Oh I'll stand
in Libya, stand lone in Gobi's
loud wide high silence and
be mute for fear my heart's slow toll shall tell thee else
than this, *Thou Art*, and this, *I am*

I'll not
be cowed: tree's fall, sea's tree-fall sound, brash
blossoms breaking silence's minute
close in the night to millioned corridors
echoing their sound of opening
leaf's
twist at autumn's portal like a key
will not freeze me —
Oh I'll bear
I'll be
in thy bleak sleep loud with my silences

Stand thus:
strange heiroglyphic —
man

III

HYMN AT THE SEASON'S END

YEAR'S end and a season's end:
                                        day's end
and the land's end, a sea coast:
                                    rock coast
treed with sea-spray, with the sound
rising in tree-shapes through silence:
                                        land's end
and the day's end and a sea coast, a silence

* * *

                                                O Earth:
Hast thou no heart, Earth Earth Earth Earth
that my heart beats thee no roar, no thunder
no nor no sweet sweet sound? How
hast thou suffered me in the sweeter season
freely to be among thine leaves, mine hands
to gather randomly thy fruits, thy pears, if this
new bleakness find me with laden hands
yet still with mine heart adrift among thine leaves?

* * *

So spoke the leaf:
                        Hast thou thine heart
in leaves still? Go make peace, make peace
among the races and the leaves: canst thou not name
of spring the leaf which makes for bitterness?
Name leaves:

This light
shall cloud you from the loud world
in brightness, sustain thine heel
above the grasses where now the season
changes and the flowers pass: Inherit thy bones
far off, — thy far dissembled heart, thy
feet, thy knees humped up in Yucatan,
thine eye, coin-lidded to a deeper
sleep, than sleep of Egypt, and thine hand
planted in desert sand that wind sifts
as it sifts these cities that thine hand
gave birth

* * *

So spoke the leaf:
And yet this shall
be given thee:
birds from the shrived
birch, the totem tree, which rind to thy sight
all hallowly the tree whence leaves departed
far and far the leaf that far thy days
left dead and hard — these carved
beaks mute, these stone
immobile wings bereft of life
as light leaves cities and the bleached
white Libyan bones

So spoke the tree . . .
So answered bone:
Thine archives
are this sand: be meek of earth:
Thine hands
be musical among her fruits, her pears:

Keep keep
thy path — thine ways of seas' collapse
as sure as sand: suffer the land
as water:
Keep most (thine heart)
the yield of him
who carries harvests in an empty hand:
Oh let thy step
be single — let thy day
suffer thy brief step straightway
from a grain of earth to grain
nor see them else but plane — not peaked
or chasmed, cracked or spaced apart
for even garment's hem to sag

The measure
of a thought is at its end:
Hold thy tongue
singly:
Speak of thy day
thine self as plain to see
thee as these bones:

As thou art brief
so be it:

be

Raymond Ellsworth Larsson

ONLY WE ARE BARREN

Morning:

THE little house stood on a meadow fenced all about with a light growth of trees that marched up the low hills to the higher ones, and out of these woods at dawn came the early bird-song and low social quacking of the crows, till group by small group the birds themselves came out, seeking their food and playing in the air. Swallows shot twittering over the house in the early gray light, and in their separate beds the young man and young woman lay listening with a half-attentive ear to the insistent summons of the oven-bird on the wooded hill behind the house, and the slow cawing of the crows flying over the land, and the twittering of the barn-swallows, swooping after early-rising insects. Out of half-closed eyes, weary with the pleasant morning semi-sleep, they saw the gray light outside the windows, and the bird-song mingled with their receding dreams, to weave a medley that would be forgotten by the time they were fully awake.

She rose always before him, with a mind immediately clear and fresh, and went out into the clean, damp air, doing her morning chores with brisk movements and a light heart. She glanced at the tomato-plants, and plucked off the leaves that had been riddled by the striped tomato-bugs. The dead wood-ash she sprinkled every day had proved ineffectual, and there was always a heavy beetle to squeeze between reluctant fingertips and throw away. The woodchuck sat erect among the boards of the torn-down barn, looking this way and that, and she smiled at him as he finally ambled off into the long wet grass, even though he'd eaten the new leaves of the beans, and chewed the tender spikes of the sunflowers.

But this morning as she bent beside the rows of springing plants, she thought suddenly of her mother, and she knew that her mother was up too and thinking of her daughter far away: 'a pity she never married again and settled down to a happy married life', and she smiled at what her mother might have thought if she could only know. She called him for his breakfast, and even as he answered grouchily from the tumbled bed, and rose blinking and groping for his bathrobe and slippers, she shivered from head to foot at the irony of her position — thinking that she could never tell her mother of her happiness, or that she was living the sort of life that she really would desire for her daughter. But the sun spilled in the windows and the cool breeze stirred the curtains, beads of dew sparkled on the spider's web across the window-pane, and across the meadow there were already heavy shadows slanting among the old, abandoned farm buildings, as he shuffled across the dining-room and smiled at her at work over the stove in the kitchen. "Don't look at me," he said, and went outdoors. There he frowned at his reddened face in the mirror tacked on the back of the house — at his sleep-lined face framed by the dark foliage on the wooded hill behind the house — and he brushed the hair back on his head and turned to look with moist eyes at the hill as he stood brushing his teeth, his legs apart and the breeze flapping his robe. A flicker chattered close above his head and dipped into the wood, its white rump winking among the trees.

It annoyed him that he could not waken easily, as she, his mind immediately bright and regulated; that for at least an hour after rising his head should be clogged and dull, and everything he looked at ugly and uninteresting. He remembered the time she'd awakened him at night, saying in a voice hushed with excitement and a certain awe, 'Darling, the skunk is out in the yard — I saw his eyes just now!' and he'd refused to sit up in his bed and look out of the window. Troubled and restless, she had taken the flashlight out into the dark to see their nightly visitor, while he fell fast asleep immediately. 'I've seen a skunk before,' he'd said, ruffled that she should have wakened him.

Not that he lacked interest in the deathless prodigality of nature, for of the two he was the naturalist, and bored her for hours with minute descriptions of the haunts and habits of the animals — their physical construction and their daily lives. It had come to them both almost at a blow — a dim, as yet uncomprehending glance of the vast design that turned on slow, inexorable wheels about them both. She, led by blind faith in her intuitions, and he by a sceptic curiosity and restless observation, had both arrived at a pathway that they felt might bring them to the field they would explore. For all about them were the surface-symbols of life, the myriad yet quantitatively insignificant facets of a great, immeasurable scheme. Not that they had never looked at them before, but they had seen them solely with the eyes of the mind.

There were the bright eyes of the skunk at night, and the seasonal songs of frogs and toads in the pond just down the road. All night the small stream rushed through the darkness, singing in its variable scale, and the field was full of fireflies and moths. One night on the road they had seen a dull gleam on the earth, and his flashlight showed a dead firefly being devoured by ants, that even in its death gave forth the light that served its apparently meaningless purpose during life. 'All this is going on about us in the dark,' she'd whispered, and had shuddered slightly. All day the crows flew back and forth across the meadow and along the wood, cawing in different keys and registers, or conversing in the trees. You met them seeking grubs in the field, or sitting on a fence-post down the road, whence they arose crying, and flapped heavily away, drawing up their clumsy feet. A dead porcupine was found in the spring one day, and thrown up on the hillside to be forgotten; he pulled a tiny quill out of his finger, with much pain. Two days later a bad smell floated off the hill, and a visit showed the carcass boiling with maggots busily at work, who disappeared again when they had finished their employment.

It was impossible for the young woman and the man not to see these phenomena gathered beneath one universal plan in constant motion, and though he refused to grant a sentient diety or spirit to the plan, his refusal was but the necessary limitation imposed upon him by the exasperating Why? They talked of that at breakfast. It was good, he felt, to see her long-familiar face across the table, and to watch her large, strong hands serving him with scrambled eggs and coffee, and he wondered at his domesticity. In her presence he felt a powerful yet quiet peace, and though he knew her body intimately and it held no further mystery for his eyes or for his hands, that familiarity itself had built a staple structure that now stood of its own accord and did not totter under contemplation.

It amused her to see him draw a present moral from perfectly fortuitous events; a trace of the pedagogue. Thus, when one of the kittens leaped to his lap, he said, "Perhaps no clearer understanding of the meaning of life, if it has a meaning, can be reached by one of *my* simple intuition, than can be drawn from the feel of a cat purring like this under my hand," and he stroked the vibrant little kitten, and smiled at its face rubbing against his fingers, and he wondered as of old at the small and stubborn flame of life animating its body to seek its own pleasure, and looking out of large, inarticulate eyes at the purveyor of that incomprehensible joy.

He dropped the subject, for it maddened him just then. But she was thinking of what he had just said about the cat, and because she felt much the same way in his arms, for no words would come that might have given some tangible meaning to the quiet moment, and though they both would say that their silence was a more speaking conversation than their speech, she knew that that too was a flight from the faceless wall of unavoidable misunderstanding that circled them about. So she pursued the question again: "If you don't believe in something besides the physical and the material, what makes you afraid of walking in the woods at night?" And because he could not answer her question, even in his mind, he was angry once again and rose from the table glaring at her long-familiar face and wondering what the devil he was doing there, when he should be a few thousand miles away with new friends and new sights and new people to talk to. So he said, "Well, at least I don't make a vast mystery of things and invent gods of the dark woods, and heavens and hells and punishment for sins and hobgoblins and devils." He knew she didn't either, so when she said, "The only devil that exists is inside your own skin," he dropped the cat on the floor and slammed the door and went outside.

In the outhouse he sat looking out the door towards the west, at the tall pines on the hill silhouetted against the pink reflection from the sunrise, and the pleasing tall thin birches growing among the darker trees. Insects buzzed and hummed outside the door in the warm morning light, and occasionally ventured in, till he waved his arms and chased them out again. Nothing could horrify his flesh so much as a great whizzing beetle, striking against his skin, and if it occurred at night in the dark, his cold flesh shrank and with a cry he frantically whirled his arms. But sitting now, he thought of his recent mental cowardice and he deplored it as usual, for a moment, dismissing it from mind with a sense of duty done, and he allowed the passionate physical pleasure he derived from her presence and her love and their long-standing relationship to overwhelm his mind once more and he was pleased to think himself 'in clover', enjoying the balanced sort of life he'd always sought, his flesh appeased, his mind at work, his body happy and well-kept. Then, when the child came, he would be complete! Thus, when he came out to get the pails to go for water, he actually sang melodies from Strauss' *Heldenleben* and noted that the Devil's Paintbrush had almost covered the meadow with its rich, scarlet wash. There were clouds in the sky, mottling the sides of the mountain with slowly moving-patterns till it almost looked majestic as it raised its meagre height against the light sky, easing the eye with its vari-colored greens, and capped with gleaming rock.

The spring tumbled down the hillside, slid down its moss-grown slide and cascaded into a little pebbled pool, and he brushed aside the whirling gnats that frequented the pool, stepping over puddles on the ground. A ruffed grouse was drumming on the hillside, and he thought of the carefully hidden nest the grouse would have, roofed over with dry leaves and wisps of grass, into which the bird might creep and remain concealed while it brooded on its eggs. When he came back she was looking in the tall grass beneath the apple-tree, and he knew she was hoping to find the young bluebird that had escaped its nest. A surge of shame swept over him as he went to aid her search, for he knew it really was his fault the bluebird had been lost. The parents were still flitting through the tree over their heads, uttering only occasional sharp cries and listening for reply, for the young bird had been lost almost a day. He had insisted on taking it out of the hole in the apple-tree — pointing out the primary and secondary feathers growing in their tracts, and they had laughed together over its appearance. 'Do you call that thing a bird!' he'd laughed, as he held it on his palm; 'the birds, you know, are closely related to the reptile-group — it's really more a lizard than a bird.' So day by day they'd inspected the little fledgling, while its parents scolded and swooped low over their heads, till yesterday it had leaped from his palm and flown. He put it in the nest, but no sooner were they back in the house than the now flight-thirsty youngster leaped again and this time disappeared into the grass. It had interested them to watch the parent-birds wheeling over the grass, until after fifteen minutes he'd said, 'They can't put it back, I will —' but it was nowhere to be found. Disheartened and contrite they searched all afternoon, till they were completely discouraged and unhappy, then they spent the evening sitting miserably side by side in the window behind the spider's web, watching the wretched female hopping from limb to limb, calling and cocking her head, while the male sat in the tree and looked at her. That night it rained, and as they sat reading by the lamp they could catch faint call-notes regularly uttered, and they looked at one another and smiled faintly or shook their heads and looked away. It was almost as though they'd lost their only child.

Afternoon:

THEY never spoke about it any more, for though they had agreed to have a child, there never had been one. The birds were silent in the heat of the early afternoon, with the exception of the bluebirds, who still gave short, sharp cries and listened for an answer. The sun beat down almost painfully, and they lay side by side on blankets in the yard, naked and sweating in the vibrant heat.

Sometimes it saddened her to contemplate her infertility, when everything around her was so fecund . . . the bluebirds on their nest had absorbed her gaze for hours, as they made innumerable trips for insect-food to stuff the youngster in the hollow tree. It opened its mouth and raised its feeble head when she had thrust her finger in the hole. There were frogs' and toads' eggs in the small pond early in June — the ants hurried frantically to carry off their great larvae when disturbed, and she herself had planted the lettuce in the kitchen-garden and set the tiny radish seeds to grow, and daily watered them and measured them with a kindly, vigilant eye, rejoiced to see them flourish and lift their leaves into the sun, despite the swarms of predatory insects. She did not feel so sorry for herself, somehow, even though she secretly knew herself to be irrevocably barren — not even during the years of her married life had she missed a period — but she felt sorry for him when she saw him looking at her with that accusing expression she knew so well. She had the conviction that he would never produce a painting that would satisfy either of them, and it was usually after he had sat an afternoon before his canvas and came dejected to her in the evening, that she wanted so to be able to say, 'Darling — I know you'd like to know — I'm pregnant.' Then, though she knew he did not care for children, she knew just as surely that he would not feel so sterile. She looked at his paintings, and something in her breast began to sink — they were clever, they were often brilliant, but something was missing that could, had it been present, have pulled the whole canvas together and given it authenticity and love. She called it understanding — that was the only word she knew for it — he saw the surfaces of things with an uncannily inclusive eye; he did not miss a thing that could be seen; but the intricate landscapes he painted were cold and had the dead, supine reality of photographs, and the old men's heads, while miracles of line and character and observation, were not instinct with life, or age, or wisdom. So, when she saw him look at her and silently say as loudly as any tongue could speak, 'You're barren — why can't you produce a child?' there was nothing for her to do but go about her housework, and do it as carefully as ever she could, making the house a joy for him to enter, and a shelter for repose. She knew he loved tea in the afternoon, so tea was always ready when he came in from his work — she built a fire in the fireplace, and his tea was served in a glass with the two spoonfuls of sugar ready stirred, so he no longer had to ask, 'Did you put sugar in?' He merely smoked his cigarette until the glass had cooled, then threw it in the fire and picked up the glass and smiled at her and talked.

She turned her head to look at him — he lay upon his back, with his reddened face lifted to the sun; his eyes were closed and sweat streamed off his cheeks and ran down on his neck. His whole body was damp with perspiration and it gleamed, and although she drew particular satisfaction to note how the mountains in their contours seemed to follow the curves of his body, she thought, I would not care to have him embrace me like that. The thought startled her for a moment, for she usually was not conscious of his body in its uglier aspects. He was quite self-conscious about his slender arms, but she had not noticed them till he mentioned it — and after all, didn't they both wash each other in their outdoor baths, pouring water over each other from the sprinkling-can, and rubbing down the places that were difficult to reach. It was like him to remark at such a moment, 'God, if anyone can love you now! Greater love hath no man than to survive seeing his girl with her hair screwed up on the back of her head, her face all soapy and gooseflesh standing out all over her'; but for her part, she never noticed the soapy, matted hair when he was washed, and his squinting, soapy face, and the way his toes turned up because the stone slab underfoot was cold — her retinas registered the sight, but her mind made no satiric comment.

Watching his body lying parallel to the distant sunny hills, his hot red face and his heavy breathing, she remembered the various times he had incited her to make quick sketches of him, determined that he'd teach her how to draw. 'Any fool can draw,' he used to say, so he placed his body in grotesque positions and timed her by his watch until she gained considerable proficiency at catching lines and postures, and then he became jealous of her success and stopped his sittings. She remembered the other afternoon at the spring, when she had given him a cold shower, at his request, laughing as she held the sprinkler over him and he howled and wriggled and rubbed his body down. Suddenly it had struck her a terrific, almost physical blow — just as he thrust out his chest against the spray and she saw the great muscles bulge with the cold, and the brown skin tighten across them, and the flush of red blood rise to the surface of his body — just as he held his head under the cascade and the water tumbled over his shoulders and down his back to flow between his legs, and he rose with a shout of pleasurable discomfort and grasped the glass and drank a great gulp of the ice-cold water — 'inside and out,' he'd said, 'inside and out'; then it struck her that this fine, sentient body with its gleaming brown skin and hot red blood and firm muscles — that this man standing there erect on his strong legs, gulping down ice-water and rubbing his stomach with a large, strong hand, was oh so surely going to die and turn back into the earth he stood upon, and rot away into a dry and powdery dust — and she was glad of it! It seemed right to her, and just and beautiful, and she was thrilled with the beauty of the destiny that nature held out to all living, with smiling eyes and firm, implacable lips, as though it were a much desired gift.

He wiped the sweat from his face with a blue bandana lying by his side and said, "Time's up," and turned to look at her. She sat up and smiled and he saw her head and shoulders against the sky and distant hills; and with that relationship he became aware of the heart of his problem — and it struck him that a painting of her head against the sky and the green hills, with those heavy, moving cloud-banks in the north, her face, smiling down out of the canvas with large, pale eyes, would just about express all he could ever feel or think or know.

"I'm going in now, darling," she said and rose, and folding up her blanket, "I'll have tea for you after work —"

"It's much too hot," he said, "I'll try to work and then go chop some wood."

"Well, then I'll weed the garden; I've left it now a week — so I won't have to wash the dishes till tonight. I think there'll be enough clean ones for supper." She went in, and he watched her naked body walking across the little lawn, swaying slightly at the hips.

"How I have wasted my life!" he said aloud, and lay back again for a moment, clasping his hands behind his head and staring at the sun with eyelids firmly closed. . . . All during the sunbath he had been looking at the sun, and his eyes had noted the spectra that his eyelids could induce, depending on how tightly they were closed, and he'd been enjoying the flowing of the heavy heat into his flesh. But with the vision of her head against the sky, it was as though all the problems he had ever pondered rose up at last and assumed material form to vex him. He knew he could never get that down on canvas, and he knew deep in his heart that he could never get anything as completely 'down on canvas' as he so hotly desired. All the great pattern that seemed to turn about them both — it was too vast a scheme for him to compass. Look at how the morning had been wasted! it was the same thing every single day. He envisaged himself so busily at work, if the ideal could only be attained, that he'd have no time for anything but work. He saw great glowing canvasses rise before his eyes — the progress of the seasons, the program of the day, the weather, faces of men and women from birth to death in beautiful schemata — he would achieve them all! But what could he do about it? All he did was to copy mountains down on prepared cloth — he painted the gnarled and weathered cedar on the hill, in sunlight and in rain and in the moon; thinking thereby to have said at least one thing completely, and put it aside forever. But when that had been done, there was still the not-to-be-considered task of painting the naked body in all its possible aspects; or even choosing an aspect which would imply all others from birth to death, and thus truly express his intuition of it.

A child would somehow explain and sanction their socially unrecognized relationship, he knew. Instead of making it a worse offence in nature, they both felt that it would be a final proof of the validity of their love, and yet it never came; and because it never came he felt himself trapped and snared into compliance with her will. The words, 'Well, here I am,' were ever present in his mind, and he laughed at the irony of his position — had he been married he would have really felt himself enslaved — but still unmarried he was twice as fettered as before, so he resented the demands of his own flesh as well as hers, and saw in them a symbol of the senseless repetition of all natural phenomena — dawn and noon and night and dawn again; birth and life and death and birth again; spring and summer, autumn, winter and then spring again, and to what end?

Life has meaning, he thought, as he sat before his canvas with the running brook and the hills sketched in, only insofar as we draw our trite conclusions from it for our own guidance and contentment. No child! he thought — no work to survive me; the fruit of love is stifled in the womb and never comes to light. The intuition is smothered in the mind and never can be uttered in its total beauty of completion, no matter how we strive. . . .

Such thoughts as these, which he knew to be invalid to anyone else and he dared not convey for fear they would be scored for puerility — and therein lay his great exasperation, for they were the best that he could do — inevitably brought him to the only bearable conclusion: life had meaning to him only in the living — so he scraped his dirty palette and he folded up his dirty paint-box, and took his empty canvas, that was to have a mountain and a stream displayed in colors real as life upon its face, and he went back to the house and got his axe.

He looked at the spider's web stretched on the window-pane; it had been repaired since last night's rain — and he wondered again if there were not some geometric plan at the basis of all natural processes, until he remembered that, at least as far as the spider's web was concerned, and the hexagonal cells constructed by the bees, the line of least resistance was always the easiest to take — and therefore a certain mathematical precision was always to be expected of living tissue at work.

He viewed his woodpile with pride — day by day it grew, as he gradually split up the half-rotten boards and beams of the old barn, and he had even established a routine in his chopping, selecting the lighter boards to break up first, and then the heavier, and then the beams; though he often thought it would have been easier to reverse the process, and take the harder work when he was fresher. But it didn't matter so long as he achieved the ultimate sweet agony of fatigue, followed by a cold shower and its miraculous muscular freshening; and the subconscious knowledge that he was building up his body as he worked was a precious secret that he spent many minutes daily contemplating, usually when the fatigue had begun to pile up to its tetanus, and his arms and back ached cruelly. Then he said to himself, 'Just one more beam,' and dragged it out of the heap of broken boards and scattered shingles and débris; and he rejoiced in the willpower he displayed.

The sun was declining in the west, thrusting its fingers through the brisk comb of the pines on the western hill. He looked over to where the kittens were playing among the tall weeds around the hotbed, lying in wait for each other, and then with prodigious leaps and bounds almost vertically in the air, pouncing on each other's backs. Their complete relaxation permits them their apparently unbounded energy, he thought, then bit his lips and fell to his chopping, for the kittens were a sore spot in his heart — try as he would, he could not get a sketch of them at rest or sleep or play that caught their gracile forms and nimble spirits. They were constantly eluding him with hitherto unbeheld attitudes, uncatlike in the extreme, and careful study seemed to no avail. Their movements seemed untimed and unrelated — they might spring out of a completely relaxed pose into a grotesque attitude of gymnastic abandon; and yet it was the perfect timing of their actions and the artless articulation of their bodies that baffled his really careful research.

Bending over his woodchopping in the pleasant heat of the setting sun, he glanced over to where she was transplanting from the hotbed to the little plowed area that was her garden. It pleased him to reflect that the garden was entirely her own creation — she constructed the hotbed herself, and covered it with some old windows from the torn-down barn — she had planted the seeds herself and nursed them carefully during the long hot June days. 'I like things that grow in the earth better than those that hop on it, I guess,' she had said, and he smiled remembering that night they had investigated the great, fat toad, with his flashlight. 'How perfectly he's constructed,' she had said, and he'd said, '*She* — it's a she — the males of this specie have black throats. Too bad she's not a male,' he'd added, 'for if she were, we could make him sing by picking him up by his two forelegs. They always do, somehow.' Now he enjoyed watching the strong curve of her loins as she crouched at her work, digging the warm earth out with her fingers and placing the tender little plant in the hole, and tucking it in firmly.

She fitted perfectly into the landscape, and the curve of her haunches was paralleled from his angle by the greater curve of the quiet hill — and he enjoyed thinking of her pregnant, and if she were, he felt the hill would suffer by the comparison, for she was quick with life and the hill stood lonely and silent forever and would never bring forth so much as a mouse. He waved his hand before his face — the gnats were torturesome these afternoons — and he bent again to his work, swinging the long axe as powerfully as he could and grunting as it bit into the hard, weathered wood. He enjoyed beyond measure the deep, sharp bite of the blade, and the heavy thud, and the echo of the blow off the wooded hill, and he formulated the words, This is right — this is as it should be; but he could not speak them for the sudden sheer joy that flooded him, and he harbored them in his breast and swung the axe harder and harder, grunting rhythmically and feeling his muscles tire, and shaking the little drops of salty sweat off the end of his nose. The pain of fatigue gradually crept up his arms and stiffened the muscles, so that though he stubbornly swung harder and harder in defiance, he finally had to stop and stand erect, his muscles soft as water and the ache leaping in his arms and sides and back.

The sound of the stream was in his ears from the south, and from the north he heard the sound of the evening wind in the trees, like the roar and insensate rush of a great overhead fire, and as he stood, axe in hand and watched, there drifted out of the west great banks of lead-colored clouds tinged beneath with salmon, as though the sun in setting had touched the earth to fire and this was the flame-lit, belching smoke of its monstrous conflagration. Slowly and steadily it drifted over the land, casting its shadow upon field and wooded hill, and the swifts wheeled nervously beneath it on crescentic wings, restless from the long day's insect-hunt and anxious for their nests.

He carried his axe in his hand over to where she knelt beside her plants — she said, "Hello," but kept to her work and did not look up at him. "Which are the peas?" he said, and she pointed to the geometrically folded leaves and the intricate curling tendrils, ready now for their supporting sticks, and spared by some miracle from the marauding 'chuck. "Christ!" he suddenly said, pointing to the meadow, "look at it all, life all around us!" and he grinned idiotically and slapped her on the back, "millions of blades of grass growing, each one a little life, each one coming out of a little tiny seed, flourishing and growing —" "Yes," she said, and turned her face up to him, and he stopped dead in the middle of his fervid speech, for he saw there were tears in her eyes, ready to spill out. Her hands were black with the rich soil she had been handling; "Yes," she said again, "only *we* — oh, forgive me!"

Night:

DURING the day the little river could be heard if you cared to listen for it, but at night it was the night's own sound, superseding all others, and with the cessation of the frog and toad-song at the end of June, it assumed undisputed sway and rushed over its smooth round stones all night, imperious and yet ghostly in its insistence. So it became their habit, when they paused in their evening conversation before the fire, to sit and listen to the river, and allow its restful sibilance to smooth away the slightest remembrance of what they had been talking about. He engaged in this escape more frequently than she, and more completely, for he added the further hypnotic of staring at the fire, until he was so far from her and the little house and their main problem, and himself, that he could not recall their recently interrupted talk when she suddenly spoke to him, and he was for the moment a complete idiot.

She drew a quiet, contemplative sort of peace from watching his face as he sat sucking at his pipe, and trying to read his thoughts — she never could. He was still young enough unconsciously to mirror his slightest feelings and ideas upon his face, in conversation, but with the coming of the night and the rush of the river in his ears and the sight of the aspiring flames before his eyes, it was as though his old age came upon him with a rush and a pounce — a mask of age-old weariness fell before his face, and it was impenetrable to her gaze and to her mind. What a fine face he has, she thought, and she was glad she had sufficient self-restraint to still her tongue and not talk to him when he sat drowned in his mood. She constructed whole realms of ideas for him to wander in, and when by accident his face assumed a momentary expression that tallied with her thought, she felt a slight triumphant thrill within her, as though she had compelled him by the power of her mind, to think of what she thought he ought to think. The fire-light cut a slender line on his face silhouetted against the dark wall behind him, and she thought what a pity it was that people's externals were such inadequate symbols of their minds and their hearts — surely the high white forehead and the long straight nose, the sensitive lips and chin in their sure and steady contour should somehow spell a finer artist than she knew him to be, and she suddenly knew that despite his endless protestations of insignificance in the face of space and eternity and the very earth itself, such an idea in its full implication was as far from his consciousness as he said the nearest star was from the earth. You had only to look at the way he held his pipe, and the unconsciously studied seriousness of his posture and expression and his movements when he thought himself 'deep in thought' to observe how much he really thought of himself. So she was overwhelmed with a great contempt for him, and she hated the way he held his pipe and the way he crossed his legs and the way he sat with head inclined to the side, looking at the crackling fire and so concerned with thoughts he obviously considered deep and pregnant; but she was immediately flooded with immense maternal pity — he grew young in his chair, and was a tired and scared little boy, petulantly sucking at his thumb and pouting at the fire, and she wanted to gather him in her arms and press his face between her breasts and rock his body back and forth until he fell asleep.

The moon mingled its unearthly light with the healthy flame-light, slanting in the windows and cutting pale squares and oblongs on the floor. Once more, as she sat by the table looking at the pages of her book in the steady glow of the oil-lamp, she was amazed at the numberless infinitesimal bugs and winged insects that collected round the lamp. If she touched them, they were spots. They hopped, or they fluttered back and forth about the shade, or they flew in idiotic circles round and round until exhausted and then dropped into the chimney and were scorched.

"Say!" he suddenly cried, and grasped her hand just as she was about to drop a fair-sized miller in the chimney, "What's the idea? Why, I'm surprised at you!"

She let the miller go and looked abashed; "I am myself," she said, "I can't imagine what made me want to do it." They let the subject drop, and sat quietly awhile listening to the kittens scampering back and forth across the floors of the little house, chasing one another in the dark. Then he got up and went out of the door. The field outside was sparkling with so many thousand fireflies, which winked so brilliantly and incessantly that for a moment after stepping out he had the impression that he had been dealt a sharp blow across the eyes. The night was cool and full of the rush of the rocky river, and the stars were far off and very cold, and mist was creeping toward the house from the fields about. Then he knew that it would be just as impossible for a musician to 'get' the sound of the stream flowing at night, as it would be for him, the painter, to get the fire he'd been watching down on canvas; and he decided that painting fire and light and water was just as much a bastardized 'program' work as translating into music a rooster crowing, or a brook rattling over its pebbles, or a kitten mewing, or the roaring of a tempest in the trees; then he knew that his whole approach to his art had been wrong — for why should he want to paint the gnarled mountain cedar in all weathers and all lights, and think thereby he had caught its magic with his brush. And why should he want to catch all the wrinkles in an old man's stupid face, or the minute details of an autumn landscape, or his lady's face against the sky — ridiculous conception!

Empty of feeling and chilled by the night air, he returned to the house. One toad was still singing, out of season, in the pond just down the road, and he had a sudden desire to escape life in all its manifestations, and not have to look at the hard and distant stars, or the blinking fireflies, or stand in the weird mingled moon- and star-light; and particularly he wanted to get in bed and put his head under a pillow, so that he might not hear the inevitable droning of the river.

The one thing he felt constantly glad of, was their constant isolation — there in the mountains they did not see or speak to more than two or three people a week, and he rejoiced because they were such simple people, and envied them their true simplicity. At Farmer Brown's, where they went to get their milk, he invariably discussed cows and milking with the dry old man, and felt a desperate delight in learning of the effect that various grasses had upon their daily yield;

while she went to the barn and bent down to the partly Persian cat and stroked her pregnant belly. 'She likes to have her kittens stroked,' she said and smiled up at him when he came to her.

He took his pipe out of his pocket and knocked its ashes out upon the floor, filled it again, then groped for the box of matches that he knew was on the window-sill. She came out of the sitting-room, the lamp, now out, in hand. "I'm going to fill the lamp again," she said, "it looked as though it wanted to go out." Lighting his pipe, he saw a movement in the spider's web, and held the match against the windowpane. "Look!" he cried, "the spider's in its web," and she came to him from the little kitchen, after she had filled the reservoir. They sat down on a bench and watched the spider as it adjusted itself to wait for chance prey — it climbed up to the center of its web, walking delicately like a dancing-master, and reaching the center, turned upside down and hung there, pulling in its jointed legs. She went to get the flashlight, but in the meanwhile a small ichneumon fly had flown against the web, and he alone saw the spider's lightning slide down to the bottom of the web, and its quick, skilled movements as it killed its prey. When she came back with the light it caught up the now dry body of the fly, dropped it to the ground, climbed aloft again and settled down to wait. "You should have *seen* it!" he exclaimed; "we'll sit here and just watch till another comes along . . . the light'll drum up trade for the spider." But nothing answered to the lure of the light in the window of the little house, and they became impatient with delay. "You're good at catching millers," he said, "why don't you go out and get one, and put it in the web?" "I will," she said, and went outdoors to search for a small moth. The cold air of the mountain night struck her body with its sudden impact, and she looked up at the night flowing away from her, leaving her feeling as though she were standing in the doorway of a vast and empty hall. The hills were a dark circle all around, and the mist lay thick and heavy on the meadow. Fireflies darted about, winking and flashing silently, and she was surprised to see how high they sometimes flew. Occasionally one would leave its greenish light burning for a moment as it flew, and simulate a tiny meteor. She caught a moth and brought it to the window.

"I hate to do this," she said, "what shall I do?" Inside she saw his strangely pale face behind the pane, and he said, "Just throw it at the web — not too hard, of course." "Gee, I hate to do this," she said, feeling the soft body of the moth in her hands and its ineffectual wings beating against her fingers; but she threw the moth gently at the web, and said, "Hurray, I'm glad it got away!" as it fell off the web; then she said, "Oh," for the moth in falling was caught by the lower part of the web, and there it hung fluttering and pulling mightily away. "Look!" he said, and she saw the spider slide down its fireman's pole and seize the moth with all its eight legs at once, and she saw its sharp-pointed legs seemingly thrust into the moth's soft body again and again with the rapid technique of long practice, as it turned the miller round and round. She came into the house to watch with him, and said, "I feel perfectly awful doing that — but I suppose spiders have to eat." "Why?" he said. She did not answer, but instead she saw his intent interest in the cruel performance, and felt for it the same disgust she felt for the brutal spider and its ways; and then she went inside.

When he came in he found her lying on the couch in the dark — and he stretched himself beside her and took her in his arms, and wooed her with the casual tactics born of long habituation. She suffered him to woo her for awhile, and then turned into his arms and gave him kiss for kiss out of the warmth of her deep love for him, but even while they loved his mind was far away, and he could remark the softened edges of the moonlit room, and the dying coals in the hearth, and the fireflies tapping against the windowpane, and he heard the kittens playing on the floor — till their climax, when for a brief moment all of him flowed toward her and into her, despite himself, and he lay helpless and palpitant in her arms, breathing against her face upon the pillow. Then he rose, and as she watched him her mind assumed a strange relationship to her heart, and for the first time she felt impersonal in his presence and could watch his movements unprejudiced by her affection for him and the long months that were between them and the inception of their love. She saw him pick up his clothes from the floor and turn the legs right-side out again, and put his feet in his slippers, and though he stood in the shadow of the fireplace she smiled, for she knew just how he would look in his shirt and no trousers. She saw him pick up her clothes, and wondered if he'd shake them out the way he had his own, or throw them carelessly aside upon a chair. She sighed. He lit the lamp and she wondered if he'd remember the loose piece that came off with the chimney, and was pleased to see he did, although she knew he'd only seen it once.

"No wick?" he had said, and his voice was still and pleasant in her ears; "ah yes — what's that! — oh, kittens asleep in the chair —" He poked the fire up and laid on more wood, took the kittens in his lap and sat looking at the fire. "Humph!" he said irrelevantly; and she remembered, looking at his chin against the light, that he had said, 'I have too much nose and not enough chin,' but she found his chin good, and reflected that all chins looked weak relaxed, and she had a momentary access of pity for all the poor men who must get tired keeping their chins thrust out to simulate a firm determination, as though they believed their wills could shape their destinies. I wonder if he'll ever understand? she thought — I wonder if he could? and for a moment she played with the idea of killing herself, so he might understand. Oh I would willingly kill myself a thousand times a day, if I thought that understanding would descend upon him suddenly and surely. No I wouldn't, she thought; simply living should make him understand, more than ever death could. God is in every man the same, she thought, and if knowledge comes it must be born of sorrow — oh, she thought, and tears sprang to her eyes, Why must wisdom come sorrowing . . . wisdom is love and love is wisdom — there is no hope, she thought, for love to come rejoicing — no hope. . . .

Sitting alone now in the armchair by the fire, his body lax and dull and his mind borne down by his body, he was aware that she was lying and looking at his profile in the firelight, and though he felt he looked old and worn and a bit thin about the ribs, and though he was conscious that his profile could have been distinctly improved by a little more chin, still he formulated the conscious yet unspoken challenge — To hell with you — do you think I give a damn if you are looking at me? His feminine mind could hear the criticism her mind was turning over, yet somehow he felt too worn and tired to move an inch to soften criticism, and he felt, Well what of it? let it be all over now, if you like — the thing has gone too far now for me to court you with artlessly assumed advantageous postures, sharp sidewise glances and studied attitudes. You've seen my body in every possible pose at every time of day or night — why should I shrink from this ultimate scrutiny and deprive your prying mind of this opportunity to find fault? If this vision end it all, I am content. So he stayed as he was, his face and thin arms silhouetted in the flickering firelight, and he looked into the fire and listened to the river, and coaxed the elusive peace he'd sought so long, until it seeped coyly drop by soporific drop, into his mind. . . .

"God!" she said, "I'd like to paint you now!" Then he laughed, and when she asked him why he'd laughed, he would not say he was ashamed of the misunderstanding his mind had erected while he sat; he simply said, "I'm tired," and wondered at his strange reply. "Why don't you go to bed, darling?" she said, "I'll make your bed," and she rose and went into the separate bedroom, while he put on his bathrobe and went outdoors again, to brush his teeth. He looked into the mirror tacked on the back of the house, and saw his pale face framed by the dark green, moonlit foliage on the hill behind the house, and he turned, brushing his teeth, to look at the hill. Two bright eyes looked at him from over near the garbage-pit, and the mist had closed down about the house and stirred perceptibly with the cold breeze from the circling hills. He looked once more up at the stars and went indoors, latching the screen-door and feeling his way through the dark rooms, he bent to kiss her face, then went into his room. "Goodnight," she said. He felt something touch his foot, and bending down, picked up the little kitten and put it in his bed and climbed inside. Lying quietly, he stroked the kitten, which had crawled under the covers and lay beside his legs. He lay and looked out the window at the fireflies and the moonlight on the birchtrees behind the house, and heard the quiet rushing of the stream — so he turned over and hid his face in the pillow, and lay listening to the beating of his heart, and the vibrant, steady purring of the kitten.

She could not close her eyes for quite a while — and even when she did, she saw the spider's web stretched across the dark field of her vision, and the spider in it, moving daintily on dancing-teacher legs. It had bright eyes. So she raised her lids again and lay staring at the ceiling, and the moonlight streaming in the screened window, and the silver face of the mist pressed against the pane, looking in. Far off on the state road, a motor-car was droning rhythmically. . . .

Alvah C. Bessie

AUBADE, 1925

KICK the blanket away,
The man of darkness has sweated enough!
One, two, three efforts, and he stands on his feet —
Chilled a little on the cold sands.

Day. Still he is blinking man,
But eyes open: he sees
The sea, little waves, waves of the morning pearl-gray!
Agh! running the wind!

But think with the head!
This is the state of man
To raise his ashes to the dawn.
Jump! A way from the coast-guard house,
Across one, two, three — ! sand mounds
And a swamp,
Crosses of wood, newspapers in coarse island grass,
Behind a hill to be as simple as the horses.

Who has seen, who can see, and who will ever see?
No one about but flat island sand and flat blue sky and a few mounds
Behind which — the sea, its reverberations.
Whence, then, if ever, will come sympathy?
Surely not out of the sun, nor out of the sky,
Nor out of eternity of flat island sand a little lowly to the aspect of eternal morning.

Orbed sun! great air! slow time!
The man of darkness
Is his own monument,
Moving his return —

Bah-h! so much blanket again —
Tousled hair — sleep!

Swims!
Spewing and spewn on to the land!
The sun is hot!

Louis Zukofsky

LEONARDO AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

ESTHETICS is a temptation too powerful to resist, since almost everyone who has a feeling for art has more than a mere feeling: he cannot help trying to see to the bottom of his enjoyment.

Who can bear to be beguiled by certain glimpses of nature, or by certain works of man without trying to explain this accidental or planned delight? — a delight which seems on the one hand independent of the intelligence (*yet which might be its principle and its hidden guide*) and which on the other hand looks quite distinct from what usually affects us (*and yet may really sum up and transfigure its variety and depth*).

So singular a feeling could not but disturb the philosophers, who had besides a less naïve and more methodical reason for noticing it and searching out its causes, its workings, its meaning and its essence.

When we look into the philosopher's own heart his vast undertaking appears as an attempt to transmute *what we know into what we would like to know*, and this performance must be carried out, or presented, or at least be capable of presentation, in a certain *order*.

Philosophies are characterized by the order of their questions since no philosopher's head can hold any question in entire independence and substantial isolation. On the contrary, a kind of ground base persists there, the feeling and the dominant tone of a latent, yet more or less close coherence between all the thoughts that this head holds, or could ever hold. The awareness of this deep connection suggests and imposes the order, and the order of questions leads necessarily to a sovereign question, that of knowledge.

Now once a philosopher has postulated or laid a basis for knowledge, justified or depreciated it (either exalting and developing it *ultra vires* by powerful combinations of logic and intuition, or else measuring it and reducing it to itself by criticism) then he is always led to *explaining* activity in general, which means expressing it in his system, in his personal order of comprehension, in which the intellectual knowledge of man's activity is only one of the modalities, although it stands for the whole.

This is one of the cruxes of all philosophy: a system of thought which started out so pure and centralized, which aimed really (whatever its contents and conclusions) at marshalling its concepts *evenly* along the bias of the particular thinker, must now try to rejoin the diversity, the irregularity, the unexpectedness of other thoughts, and its order must organize their seeming disorder.

Its very singleness and sovereignty compel it to reconstitute the plurality and autonomy of spirits. It must allow the legitimacy of things it has condemned for error and so ruined, must allow nonsense the right to live, must recognize the fruitfulness of contradiction, and at times it must feel that even it, all instinct with belief in its own universality, even it must shrink to being the particular product of the bent of some one individual. Here wisdom begins while philosophy declines.

Indeed, *other* existences always disturb a thinker's splendid egoism. He is inevitably baffled by the arbitrariness of their feelings, thoughts and acts. Every one of us defends his preference for his own feelings, thoughts and acts by thinking himself the agent of necessity. And yet, the *other* man does exist, and forces his riddle upon us, a riddle which harasses us under two guises: first as the difference of conducts and characters, as the diversity of decisions and attitudes that men adopt to preserve their bodies and goods, and then as the variety of tastes, of expressions and of the creations of the sensibility.

Our Philosopher cannot resist absorbing into his own lights all realities which he wants to incorporate in his reality, or at least to reduce to its possible possessions. He would *comprehend* them in the full force of the word, and so he draws up plans for building a science of the values of action and a science of the values of expression, or of the creation of emotions an — and ETHIC and an ESTHETIC — as though the Palace of his thought must look unfinished without this symmetry of wings, prisons where his almighty and abstract ego shall throw passion, action, emotion and invention into chains.

Every philosopher, after he has done with God, with Self, with Time, Space, Matter, Categories and Essences, then turns toward men and their works.

As the philosopher had invented *Truth*, so he invented the *Good* and the *Beautiful* and as he had invented rules for harmonizing isolated thought with itself, even so he set about rules for making action and expression conform to precepts and models forever safeguarded from any man's whims and doubts by bearing in mind one single and universal principle, which the philosopher must therefore define or designate before all else, and *uninfluenced by any individual experience.*

Few events in the history of the mind are so striking as this introduction of Ideals. It is an essentially European achievement, and their decline coincides with the decline of the virtues typical of Europe.

And yet, just as we still more or less cling to the idea of pure science, rigorously expounded from *local* evidences whose properties are boundlessly transferable from identity to identity — so we are also half convinced that a Morality and a Beauty do exist independent of times, places, peoples and persons.

Yet every day sees this noble building worse ruined. It may seem strange, but the very growth of the sciences actually tends to lessen our notion of Knowledge (*Savoir*). I mean that that part of knowledge (*science*) which seemed unshakable, and which it shared with philosophy — that is to say, a faith in intelligibility and a belief in the intrinsic worth of mental attainments — now yields this little by little to a new way of conceiving or valuing the function of knowledge (*connaissance*). We no longer think of the intellect as massing its efforts toward one limit of the mind, toward *Truth*. A self-examination will bear out our present-day belief that all *knowledge* (*savoir*) that brings no effectual *power* has a mere conventional or arbitrary importance. Knowledge is worthless save as the description or receipt of verifiable power. Thus all metaphysics, and even any theory of knowledge (*connaissance*), be they what they may, are rudely cut off and cast away from what *we all* more or less consciously hold as the only true knowledge (*savoir*), *payable in gold.*

By this same stroke ethics and esthetics naturally break up into problems of legislation, statistics, history or physiology — and into lost illusions.

So what call can there be for planning to "make an esthetic?" A science of the Beautiful? Do we still use the word? I think we only speak it *laughingly*, or else — when we dream of the past. Beauty is a kind of corpse, shelved away by novelty, intensity, strangeness, in short, anything that promises *dividends in thrills.* Brute excitement sways our recent souls, and works of art are now used to drag us away from contemplation, from the *stationary bliss* that was once essential to the general idea of Beauty. We are more and more possessed by the most unstable and immediate modes of the mind and the senses. The *unconscious*, the *irrational*, the *instantaneous*, all, as their names show, the privations or negations of persistent forms of mental action, these have ousted the models *awaited of the spirit.* We no longer see fruits of the desire for "perfection." And indeed, that superannuated desire had to yield before the mania, the insatiable thirst for *originality*. The ambition to make perfect is part of the plan to make a work independent of any age; but the obsession to be novel would mark its event by contrast to its own instant. The old work admits, indeed requires *heredity*, imitation or tradition, which are steps in its ascension toward the absolute object of its desire. The modern work even more thoroughly rejects and depreciates them, since its essence is to be *different.*

In our time a "definition of Beauty" can only be looked on as a document of history or philology. This great word "Beauty," as understood in its ancient fulness, has been laid away in the drawer of the numismatists of language, along with so many other coinages of words no longer current.

Nevertheless, some problems have lasted and may still be put, problems that cannot be grouped with any of the well defined scientific disciplines, that do not arise from any particular technique, and that yet seem to have been overlooked or spurned by the philosophers, although they are forever recurring, under cloudy forms, in the uncertainties of artists.

For example, think of the general problems of composition (I mean the *different* orders of relations between the whole and its parts), the problems arising from the diverse functions of each element in a work, the problems of *ornament* that border on geometry, physics and morphology, yet center nowhere, though they suggest an indefinable kinship with the balanced forms of bodies, the figures of harmony, the patterns of living beings, and the half or wholly conscious products of man's activity when it sets out systematically to recover a free space or time, as though driven by a kind of dread of emptiness.

Questions of this order do not trouble pure thought. It is the creative instinct that gives them birth and strength, when it has outgrown the deed of the moment and searches the conclusions of a meditation of speculative look and philosophic shape for some decision to fix the form and structure of a concrete creation. At times the artist takes to the philosopher's path in order to get back to principles that can justify and organize (*edifier*) his intentions, and give them a more than individual authority. This is simply an interested philosophy that aims beyond its thought at particular consequences for a work. For the true philosopher *what is* is the end to attain, and the goal to seek through the skirmishes and workings of his mind. The artist, on the contrary, spawns out into possibility and appoints himself *the agent of what shall be.*

The philosopher's esthetics differs most markedly from the artist's reflection in proceeding from a thought that considers itself foreign to the arts and essentially different from a poet's or musician's thought — in which it is mistaken, as I shall say later. The philosopher looks on the works of the arts as accidents, particular cases, effects of a busy sensibility that gropes toward a principle which only philosophy sees whole and understands. Philosophy cannot regard an artist's activity as *necessary*, since it considers his supreme aim as belonging immediately to philosophical thought, and as lying directly open to it through a scrutiny of the knowledge of knowledge or of a system that conjugates the world of the senses with the world of the intellect. The philosopher does not feel the particular necessity of artistic activity; he finds it hard to conceive the importance of material modes, of means and values of execution, since he cannot help tending to distinguish them from the *idea*. He is loth to think of a close, unceasing and even-handed exchange between what you want to do and what you do, between what he pronounces "form" and what he pronounces "essence" (*fond*), between consciousness and automatism, between "matter" and "spirit." Now it is precisely the grand practice and the freedom got by these exchanges, the artist's hidden possession of a kind of common denominator between very different elements, the sure and solid collaboration, the *unremitting* coördination, in each of his acts, between his will and necessity, the expected and the unexpected, between his body, his materials, his wishes, or his very absences — it is this grand practice that makes it possible to add an *object* to nature (nature considered as a practically endless source of subjects, models and pretexts) — an object not to be simplified nor reduced to a single and abstract thought, since its origin and its effect depend on an inextricable system of independent conditions. *You cannot outline a poem the way you outline a "world."* The outline of a thesis keeps its essentials. The outline of a work of art misses the essentials. A proper understanding of this fact will measure the vanity of the esthetician's analysis.

You cannot build up a general formula of beauty by extracting certain esthetic features from some natural or artificial thing or verdict (*dispositif*), and then grouping them with others. I do not mean that this method has not often been tried, but that its practitioners do not realize that they are investigating a research already solved, and that anyway the object of their consideration cannot be reduced to a few of its features without losing its intrinsic emotional virtue.

The philosopher cannot grasp how the artist is able to pass almost indifferently from form to content and from content to form, or how a form can come to him before the meaning that he is going to give it, or how the idea of a form can mean the same to him as a content that awaits a form.

In short, if esthetics were possible, then the arts would melt away before it, *before*, that is, *their essence.*

By all this I do not mean to refer to the study of techniques which treats only of processes and particular solutions, and tries to assist in making or classifying works, but does not aim at rejoining beauty *by a path outside the domain of Beauty.*

Perhaps you can grasp nothing well except what you might have invented. Pascal says he would never have invented painting. He could not *see* the use in taking trouble to duplicate trifles in their pictures. Yet how often this great artist in words set himself to *draw*, and to make a speaking likeness of his thoughts. True, he does seem at last to have discarded all efforts, *save one*, and held all save death as a painted idleness.

What did Emmanuel Kant do when he based his Ethics and his Esthetics on a myth of universality, on the latency in all men of an infallible and unanimous feeling? What have all the philosophers of the Good and the Beautiful done? What are they but unconscious creators, who think to replace a rough or hasty notion of reality by a more exact or complete one, *when*, *really*, *they are inventing* — one by subtle splitting, the other by an instinct for symmetry, and both through longing for a certain state, through a deep love for *what might be* — what are they doing but creating, when they add problems to problems, entities to beings, and fresh symbols, forms and formulae of growth to the treasury of the mind's activities and its arbitrary constructions?

The Philosopher sets out to absorb the artist and to "explain" what the artist feels and does, but lo, what happens is the opposite. Philosophy, far from enfolding and assimilating the whole field of creative sensibility under the classification of the Beautiful, far from giving birth to esthetics and sustaining it, really springs from esthetics and finds its justification, the soothing for its conscience and its real "depth" only in its power to build and in its freedom as abstract poetry. Nothing but an esthetic interpretation can save the hoary monuments of metaphysics from the collapse of their more or less hidden postulates, and from the inroads made by the analysis of speech and of the mind.

At first it may seem hard to think out, *as artists*, certain problems we have heretofore only thought of *as seekers after truth*, and to change these products of the most intimate sincerity into beautiful untruths, into fictions as such. What a mess, you will say, what a mess indeed. The philosophers might as well make ready for this change, since it is only the ordinary course of nature. I see it as a reform demanded by the sequence of things, and I find its pattern in the early history of sculpture. In the beginning, the simulacrum of a man or beast, even though seen to emerge from the hands of a workman, was thought not only to equal the living (however rough and rigid it was) but to be endowed with supernatural powers. They made gods of stone and wood that did not even look like men, and they fed and they worshipped these featureless figures. And notice this: the more shapeless these idols were, the more were they adored. (This is worth comparing with the intercourse of children with their dolls and lovers with their beloved. Perhaps the life we imagine we receive from a thing is in proportion to the life we must give it.) But as this imparted life little by little declined and withheld itself from such rude images, *the idol took on beauty.* As criticism compelled it, it lost its imaginary power over events and beings to gain in real power over attention. The sculptor became free and became himself.

Will it shock and vex the philosopher's feeling too deeply if I liken their reverend truths, their principles, their Ideas, their Being, their Essences, their Noumena, their World, all these generations of notions that took turns at seeming necessary, if I liken them to the idols of which I spoke? Imagine what a philosophy that would be which should stand to our traditional philosophy as a Fifth Century statue stands to the clumsy idols of the beginnings.

I sometimes think that if compositions of ideas and abstract constructions without illusion, without recourse to the faculty of hypostasis became little by little possible and admitted, that such a shrewd philosophy might prove more fruitful and truer than the philosophy that clings to the primitive belief in explanations, more human and more enticing than the philosophy that strikes a rigorously critical attitude. Then perhaps, in a new spirit and with very other ambitions, we could again undertake the high enterprise that metaphysics had undertaken and directed toward ends that criticism has undermined. Mathematics long ago freed itself from any aim foreign to its conception of itself, a conception which it found by developing its own particular technique and by becoming aware of the proper value of this development; and this freedom in its art, which had seemed to lure it far from reality, into a world of useless quibbles, difficulties and elegancies, has wonderfully limbered and equipped it to second the physicist.

Is it altogether vain to conceive an art of ideas, of the order of ideas, or of the plurality of the orders of ideas? I may be allowed to think that not all architecture is mass, nor all music sound. There is a kind of feeling for ideas and their analogies that I think can act and be trained like the feeling for sound or color; indeed, had I to define the philosopher, I might base my definition on the predominance in him of just this kind of sensibility.

I believe that a man is born a *philosopher*, just as he is born a *sculptor* or a *musician*, and that this innate gift may now declare its independence by dropping its ostensible pursuit of a kind of *truth* or *reality* in order not so much to pursue as to create. The philosopher could use in freedom the strength he got in constraint; and in a thousand ways and shapes he could spend his peculiar vigor and faculty of giving life and movement to abstractions.

Thus the *Noumena might be rescued* simply by the good taste of their intrinsic harmonies.

I have an excellent demonstration for all this that I have proposed as supposition. What seemed mere possibility is seen to be fact when you glance at the fate of the great systems of philosophy. In what frame of mind do we read philosophers? Who consults them in hopes of finding anything except enjoyment or exercise for his mind? When we settle down to read them, do we not feel that we are for the time submitting ourselves to the rules of a splendid game? What would become of these masterpieces of unverifiable discipline if we did not accept them for love of an austere sport? If we refute Plato or Spinosa, is nothing of their astonishing constructions left standing? Nothing whatsoever, *unless they stand as works of art.*

Nevertheless, outside philosophy, at certain strategic points in the field of the will to intelligence, some singular lives have cropped up, whose abstract thought, though very alert and capable of all subtilties and depths, still never lost its preoccupation with figured creations, with applications and sensible proofs of its powers of attention. These minds seem to have mastered a strange and intimate knowledge of the unceasing exchanges between *arbitrariness* and *necessity.*

Leonardo da Vinci is the supreme example of these higher beings.

What can be more striking than never to see his name in the lists of philosophers that tradition has fixed?

He is probably left out for lack of formally philosophical treatises. What is more, Leonardo's masses of notes form a simultaneous body that fails to tell us the order of questions in his mind. We are at a loss which of his intentions and curiosities to subordinate, since he himself seems to have launched himself into the most varied subjects, following the whim of the time and place, until he gives the impression, which I do not dislike, of a kind of *condottiere* serving every Muse by turn.

But, as we said before, a philosopher must show a certain order of ideas to be qualified for admission in good standing to the History of Philosophy (a history which would be impossible without certain conventions, notably a *necessarily arbitrary* definition of philosophy and the philosopher).

Leonardo would be debarred for lack of an explicit construction in his thoughts, and, let us boldly add, for lack of any *readily summed up* exposition by which to classify the essentials of his conceptions and to compare them, problem by problem, with other systems.

But I would go further, and I would set him apart from philosophers for more substantial reasons, and for features more striking than these negations. Let us see, or let us imagine, what it is that distinguishes his intellectual act so sharply from theirs, although so like it by moments.

The philosopher's aim, if closely looked into, is very simple: *to express the results of his meditation through discourse.* He tries to build up a *knowledge* (*savoir*) that *speech* can wholly express and transmit.

But for Leonardo, speech was not all. Nor was knowledge all for him, perhaps only one of his means. Leonardo sketched, calculated, built, decorated, used every fashion of matter that can take the stamp of ideas and that will give them a chance to glance off against things by opposing them with the resistances and conditions of another world, conditions and resistances which no prevision, no foreknowledge may circumvent through purely mental elaborations. *Knowledge* was not enough for this multiple and pushing nature; he must have *power.* Understanding and creation are one for him. He is loth to distinguish theory from practice, speculation from the reaching out of power, truth from what might be true, which includes the construction of works and machines.

This makes Leonardo a true and direct ancestor of our present day science; our science that is daily becoming a business of obtaining powers. I might define science by a definition that lies *in us all* (say what we may) thus: *science is the body of receipts and processes that always work*, and it comes ever closer to being *a table of the correspondences between our acts and phenomena*, a table increasingly precise and rich in such correspondences, drawn up in systems of ever more efficient notations.

We of today recognize but one value that is not conventional: the infallibility of forecast. We are tempted to say that *all the rest is fairy tales*, and to lump in this rest all explanations and all "theories." It is not that we fail to recognize their usefulness, even their necessity, but we have learned to consider them as means and instruments, as intermediary maneuvers, forms of groping, provisional modes that prepare, by combining signs and figures and by arguing tentatively, for the final and decisive perception.

In the last few decades we have seen successions, and even the co-existence, of contradictory, yet equally fruitful theses, of doctrines and methods whose principles and exigencies clashed and cancelled out, even while their positive results were enlisted as acquired powers. We have seen *laws* reduced to more or less *convenient conventions*, and we know that many of these laws have lost their essence to be humbled into the ranks of mere probabilities, that is, to be good only so far as our observation goes. And finally we have seen it grow harder and harder, almost impossible, to apprehend a "world," a world which we guess at, a world which forces itself on our minds, but which, as shown through a roundabout series of relays and of indirect sensory consequences, as built up by an analysis whose results are disconcerting when translated into common speech, excluding all images (since this world must be the substance of their substance, being in a way the basis for all categories) this world *both exists and does not exist*. Yet all this terribly variable knowledge (*savoir*), these inhuman hypotheses, this knowledge (*connaissance*) at odds with the knower, nevertheless leave behind them an accumulating and incorruptible store of facts and of ways for producing facts, in short, of powers.

No longer can spiritual effort culminate in a final contemplation, whose very notion has become senseless (or perhaps approximates more and more a theological conception, and demands a contemplator beyond our measure). On the contrary, our mind regards its own labors as *an activity to bridge over two experiments, or states of experiment*, the first being *given*, the second *foreseen.*

This kind of knowledge (*savoir*) sticks close to acts and instruments of execution and control; indeed away from them *it has no sense*, though while founded on them and referring to them from moment to moment, it is able to deny any sense to all other knowledge, springing as that does from discourse alone and moving only toward ideas.

What must become of philosophy, waylaid, taken aback by discoveries whose unexpectedness destroys our confidence in the virtues and the value of the ideas and deductions of the mind as reduced to itself alone and attacking the world? Not only ridden down and surprised at every moment by the physical sciences, what must philosophy become when it is also disquieted in its oldest, most tenacious, and perhaps least regrettable habits by the painstaking labors of the philologists and linguists? And what must become of *I think* and of *I am?* And what must become of that shrouded nothingness, the verb TO BE, that has run so handsome a race across the void? Most subtle artists have spun unending questions and answers out of these lowly syllables, whose fortunes have so strangely grown from the vanishing or wasting away of their early meanings.

If we discard our habits of thought and look at the present state of our minds, we will readily see that philosophy, as defined by its work (which is a *written* work), is, objectively speaking, a particular literary genre, characterized by certain subjects and by the recurrence of certain terms and certain forms. Yet this narrrow word spinning claims a supreme place on the strength of the generality of its views and formulae.

But since it is utterly uncorroborated and leads to establishing no power, since this very generality which it swears by cannot and should not be considered as transitory, nor as obtaining or summing up verifiable results — we must rank philosophy not too far away from poetry.

Philosophers are unwittingly and unwillingly artists. Their art is certainly not the poet's art of abusing the resonance and occult sympathies of words. (Poetry assumes that words have an absolute value, that can be isolated from their sense.) When the philosopher asks himself: *What is reality?* and *what is freewill?* he wilfully overlooks the metaphorical, social and statistical origin of these words, whose slipping towards indefinable senses allows him to draw the most profound and delicate combinations from his mind. He will not end his search with the plain history of a word through the ages, with the chronicle of the misunderstandings, metaphorical usages and quaint locutions whose multiplicity and incoherence make a poor word as complex and mysterious as a being, until it pricks an almost frantic curiosity, as a being would, eludes all analysis in finite terms, and although created by chance for homely needs and coined by old husbandry for barter in kind, the word rises to the lofty fate of exciting a marvelously attentive mind to all its powers for questioning and all its resources for answering. This word, this nothing, this anonymous coinage of fortune, remodelled by anything and everything, is changed by the dialectic of a few men into an extraordinary instrument, fit to rack the very oligarchs of thought, into a kind of key that can stretch every spring in a mighty head and gape chasms of expectation before the longing to grasp all.

The artist's whole business is to make something out of nothing. Now what can be more truly *personal*, more indicative of a person and his individual bent, than this labor of the philosopher when he smuggles a thousand difficulties into some ordinary expression, when he makes doubts and troubles, discovers antimonies, startles the habits of the mind by a whole interplay of disconcerting and imposing substitutions? What could be more personal under its show of universality?

The word, the philosopher's tool and end, the clay for him to breathe upon and to knead through and through, the word was the least of tools for Leonardo. Mathematics itself, which is really nothing but discourse along exact rules, was for him a mere scaffolding. "Mechanics," said he, "is the paradise of the mathematical sciences." This thought foreshadows Descartes, as does his constant preoccupation with physiological physics.

There Leonardo blazed a trail that we of today are taking.

Here is what most astounds me in Leonardo, what opposes and joins him to the philosophers more strangely and profoundly than everything else I have claimed about him and them. Leonardo was a painter: *I say that painting was his philosophy*. Or rather, he said it himself, and he talked painting as you talk philosophy, bringing all things into it. We think of painting as private and far from being able to satisfy the whole intelligence, but Leonardo unboundedly magnified it into the supreme aim of a universal spirit. In the same way Mallarmé, in our time, oddly thought that the world had been created solely to be expressed by poetry.

Leonardo thought that you required all knowledge and almost all techniques (geometry, dynamics, geology, physiology) in order to paint. For a battle scene he must study whirlwinds and dusty air, which he will not start to paint until his watchfulness has saturated itself with a knowledge of their laws. A figure sums up researches that range from dissection to psychology. With exquisite precision, he noted the attitudes of bodies according to their age and sex, and in the same way analysed professional actions. He cared little what road he took to get at forms through their causes. He started off from the appearances of things, whence he reduced, or tried to reduce, their morphological characteristics to systems of forces; and these systems once known, *felt*, and reasoned out, he consummated, or rather renewed, his movement by making a drawing or a painting, where all the fruits of his labors lie gathered. He thus recreated an aspect, or projection of beings by analysing every one of their properties to the bottom.

What use was speech in all this? He used it as a tool, as numbers are, a working device that helped on the undertakings of his heart, exactly the way marginal sketchings sometimes help a *writer* on to working out his expressions.

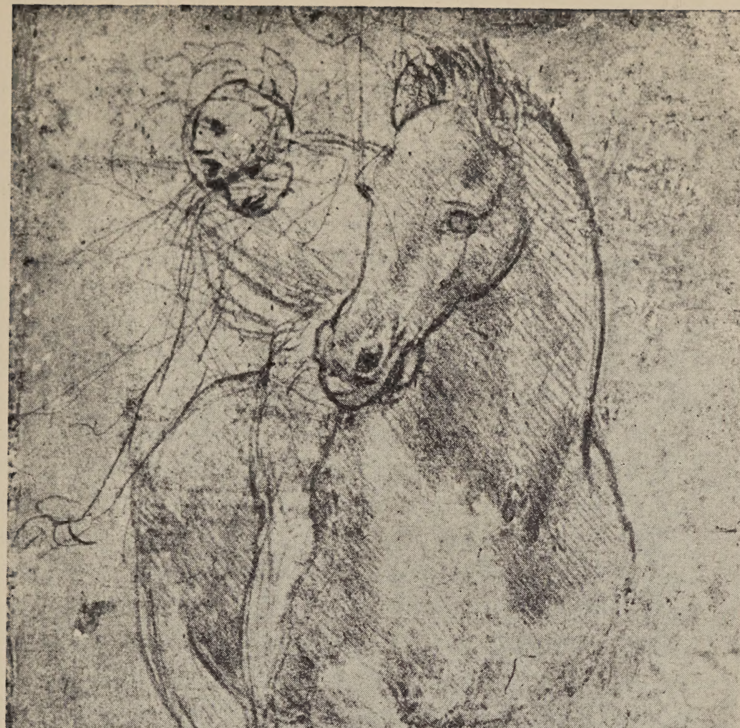
In short, painting presented Leonardo with all the problems that the mind can encounter in trying to make a synthesis of nature — and then some.

Yet is he, or is he not, a philosopher?

Alas, it is more than a question of choosing a vague label. I hesitate to pin "Philosopher" on a man famous for so many works *not in writing*, because I am faced with the problem of relating a mind's total activity to its chosen vehicle of expression, that is, *to the sort of works that give it the keenest feeling of its strength* and to *the external resistances that it accepts.*

Leonardo's special case is one of those remarkable coincidences that rouse us from our mental habits and make us look over our inherited ideas with fresh eyes.

I think that one can more or less confidently say that the ascendency that philosophy holds in the philosopher's head, the profound exigency it shows, the broad inquiry that ac-



Leonardo Da Vinci Horse and Rider

Collection of John Nicholas Brown

companies it, the greed for facts to be swallowed and digested, the ever present thirst for causes, *this ascendency is exactly represented in Leonardo by his unceasing preoccupation with painting.*

This wounds our deep rooted distinctions, and strains our notions of both philosophy and painting as they had been drawn up and separated in our heads.

Leonardo looks a kind of hybrid, a centaur or chimaera, to the eye of habit, taught to split up our nature and to regard philosophers as blind and handless, and artists with heads too stunted to hold anything above instinct.

Yet how can the cult of a plastic art replace philosophy? We must try to make this conceivable. First let it be said that we cannot argue from the very most "inner" states or facts, since there, in the intimacy or instant of the soul's life, the philosopher and the artist cannot be told apart. We must stick to what we can see, distinguish and contrast "objectively," which brings us to our essential problem of the part played by speech. If philosophy cannot be separated from expression through speech, if this expression is every philosopher's aim, then Leonardo, whose aim was painting, was no philosopher, however much he may have borne the stamp. We cannot but abide by all the consequences of this judgment, and some are rigorous, as will be seen.

The philosopher *describes* what he has thought. You can sum up a philosophical system by classifying its terms, or by tabulating its definitions. Logic is but the permanence of the properties of this table and its directions for use. Thus have we been taught and thereby forced to give articulated speech a quite special centrality in our way of thought. This centrality is certainly earned, for speech, even though made up of numberless conventions, is almost *ourselves*. We can hardly "think" without it, nor steer, hold or recapture our thought, nor, above all, somewhat *foresee* our thought.

But let us look closer, into ourselves. The minute our thoughts tend to go deep, to close with their object, trying to work directly on things (so far as their act may be made things) and no longer work on *indifferent* signs that call up superficial ideas of things — the minute we live our thoughts, we feel them part company with all conventional speech. However much speech may mesh into our presence, however *thick* the clustering of its "hits," however acutely this acquired organization be felt, and however prompt to intervene, yet for all that we are able with an effort, a kind of *enlarging* or *pressure of duration*, to split speech off our passing mental life. We feel that words fail us, and we know no reason why they should answer our need, that is *replace* us, since the power of words (whence their usefulness) is to lead us back "into the neighborhood" of states already felt, and to regularize or set up *repetition* — while here we have joined that mental life that *never repeats itself*. This is probably what is meant by "thinking deeply," which does not mean thinking more usefully, more exactly or more completely than usual, but simply thinking far, as far away as possible from the automatism of words. We then feel that grammar and the dictionary are foreign gifts, *res inter alios actas*. We perceive directly that speech, however organic and indispensable, achieves *nothing* in the realm of thought, where *nothing* fixes its transience. Our attention distinguishes speech from us, while our rigor, like our fervor, sets us against it.

Nevertheless, philosophers do set out to relate their speech to their most inner life, to reclassify their speech and piece it out to fit the needs of their lonely experience, and all to make it a more subtle and sure means for the *cognizance* and the *recognizing of their knowledge.* Philosophy may be thought of as the attitude, the expectation and the constraint through which someone, sometimes, thinks his life, or lives his thought, in a kind of equivalence or reciprocity between *being* and *knowing*, trying to suspend all conventional expression while he apprehends the assembling and the dawning of the most priceless of all combinations of the reality he feels given him and the reality he might receive.

However, the nature of speech conflicts with this great attempt of all philosophers, and the strongest of them has struggled in vain to make his thought talk. In vain they created or transfigured certain words, yet still failed to convey their states of mind. Be it Ideas, Dunamis, Being, Noumena, Cogito or Ego, all are ciphers, determined solely by their context, and so it is a kind of personal creation of their reader that gives life (as in reading the poets) to works where common speech is strained to convey non-transferables, and things that dwell beyond earshot of the word.

If you base all philosophy on verbal expression and yet deny it the privileges, and even the very limitations proper to the arts, then you must risk restricting it to the sundry styles in which a few wonderful hermits have *soliloquized.* No one has ever seen, or even imagined two philosophers in agreement, nor any doctrine with a single and constant interpretation.

There is still more to be said about the relation between the philosopher's activities and the word. I shall bring up but one fact.

If we but look about us, we will see speech dwindling in importance in every field where accuracy is on the increase. Undoubtedly common speech will always be used to teach the manufactured languages, and adjust their strong and accurate mechanisms to minds as yet unspecialized. But by contrast, speech has become more and more a means for the first rough approximations, and is being ousted as systems of purer notation develop, each one more adapted to one special use. More than this, each advance of this invasion narrows the old horizons of philosophy, whose primitive means of expression cannot seize any of the things that are taking on precision in this world where all is doing so.

In some singular cases today the expression by arbitrary lists of signs has given way to tracings from the things themselves, or to transpositions or graphs taken directly from them. Knowledge has found the way to make laws plain to the eye, readable at sight, and now the world of experience is in a way *duplicated* by a visible world of curves, planes and diagrams that transpose properties into figures, whose inflections our eye can follow and thus feel, by their fluctuation, the mutability of a magnitude. *Graphs* attain a continuity that words cannot, and they are plainer and more exact. Words doubtless call the graphs into being, give them meaning and interpret them, but words no longer consummate the act of the mind's possession. A kind of picture writing is growing up to connect qualities and quantities, a language whose grammar is a body of preliminary conventions (scales, axes, quadratures, etc.), and whose logic is the dependence of figures or parts of figures, their properties in situation, etc.

Music offers us a very different order of representation, yet related by certain analogies. The resources of the "world of sound" are deep, as everyone knows, and the composer's devices communicate, force upon us the *presence* of all our emotional life, its inklings of mazes, crossings and layers of remembrance, doubt and impulses, its forces and its fictitious lives and deaths. At times the outline, the modulation conforms so closely to the laws of our shifting moods that it seems to be their exact formula in sound, a model fit for an objective study of the subtlest subjective phenomena. In this class of research no verbal description can approach these images that impinge upon the ear, since they transform and replace the very vital facts they transmit, even though they give themselves out for the arbitrary creations of some man, *since it is a question of an art.*

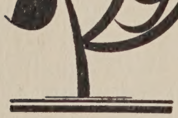
These examples show how audible figures and progressions can adjust themselves to the modes of philosophic thought that are considered the most "profound," that is, the farthest from speech. Thus the most valuable content and perceptions of philosophy, which it conveys so imperfectly, are at least suggested, if not transmitted, through media utterly unlike the traditional media of philosophy.

Nevertheless, philosophy always has sought, and will seek more and more to guard against *the danger of seeming to aim at nothing beyond words.* The "self consciousness" that is (under sundry titles) its main means of existence — and is also forever leading it toward scepticism and perdition — keeps it in mind of its inner vigor and necessity, and also of all the weaknesses arising from its dependence on discourse. This leads almost all philosophers to distinguish their thought from all conventions. Some are especially alive to the continual productions and transformations of their inner world, and so peer *beyond speech* at the birth of that intimate form that may be called "intuition," since our real or seeming spontaneity gives us, among other things, immediate lights, instant solutions, unexpected impulses and decisions. Other philosophers are less concerned with change than with *permanence*, and so set about solidifying the positions of their thought in speech itself. They put their faith in formal laws, they anatomize the structure of intelligibility, whence they think that all speech derives its disconnectedness and the pattern of its propositions.

Should the former philosophers follow their bent, they would drift toward the art of duration and hearing: they are musical philosophers. The latter, who think of language as constructed according to reason and a definite plan, who would seem to ponder all its implications as though they existed simultaneously, and who attempt to reconstruct this fabric of everyone and no one from its foundations, or to finish it as though it were the work of one man — these philosophers are very like architects.

I cannot see why they should not both of them adopt Leonardo, who took painting for a philosophy.

Paul Valéry
(translated by A. Hyatt Mayor)



TURQUOISE CHANT

OVERTONES of light on the Frijoles
(cliff dwellings of a warmer race, the aspect of the living sun
on their bold chiselled countenance)
warm the dusk of this incipient night.
The wind has taken time to know
the face of rock, and moulded it
to fit the circumspection of the earth
and lives beneath the rugged brow of this cliff edge of sharpened
rock-relief, that overhung the mind of man
for centuries
Until the brooding of the crumbling ledge
had intervened between the race and turquoise of the skies
and man was forced to place the color of the atmosphere
upon his brow,
distilling blue had patterned it
to place upon his body, fingered and defined
(the arm of a necessity for heaven).

NORMAN MACLEOD

THE SAD END

WE lived in the steep house without gardens but the sun was good there and the hours heavy. We came to live together promising nothing and expecting nothing. We came there to work and to have the sun and to learn again to sleep at night. The house had steep balconies at the back and in the evening we sat on separate balconies and thought separate thoughts and the sound of singing was heavy in the streets. The black men stood outside the wall and cursed each other in a shrill Spanish, and sound of carriage wheels and horses' hoofs went on forever beyond the streets. At times I thought this would satisfy me, and that I could live here forever.

In the streets were flower markets and we saw an old woman die without passion and these things united us. The trees had roots and the pulled flowers stood on our tables but we had no gardens. We often thought we should like hydrangeas and lilacs and pansies without their meanings. But instead hibiscus buds floated in the cracked bowls and the hot rooted roses dying within the hour.

We read about snow and talked of living in a northern country. And wondered if we could learn to ski and speak another language. In the end we came to say the hot country is good and the sunlight is healing and it is easy to die here. And we came to work more and live less and have no adventures.

The end was still more strange than this. She had large ankles and feet which she placed on a stool beside my own delicate ones. She remained in bed a great deal and said nothing. Her hair grew strangely and only the nape of her neck and the tips of her breasts were beautiful. We felt her boredom added to our strangeness and in the house I felt that one should not speak unless in whispers. We had lettuce and apple salad for luncheon.

We drank all day the day he packed his suitcase and made ready to store things. He said *no not for a long time* and *I am not strong enough* and *I must collect my forces.* And I said nothing or else too much. It wasn't sad when we drank and he packed, and we read the papers because it was Sunday. We spoke of an island but never went there.

He said *I wanted you to know, I think you should . . . an hour before you phoned I prayed that you would come back. When I was delirious I thought to come there and look in the streets and inquire for you.* (And we sat on the huge stones and listened to music and the wind came up.) *I thought you should know that after you had called I worked last night, I was able to work. And to-day I kept my appointments.*

He said *I hate this sort of thing.* And he was late rising and we missed the train. He read while the sad train pulled in and out of blackened stations with people alighting and people coming on to their purposes. He saw nothing but that he had stopped the thing that was hard to stop and had helped to be rid of a bad influence.

And she came in with the same train and very silent.

The days grew on us with hot sun and dust on the wildflowers on the roadways and the clearer nights. We never had each other. There were reasons why we should not and we were a reasonable people. It was different from the first in that much, because there was a consequence and a great deal of suffering, and then the second was different too, and had the fulfillment but no consequence . . . and the third was perfected in sensuous movement. But the house collapsed about us and we saw the hallways darken and dared not speak what we were thinking.

When the car rattled again I knew that they had gone away. I knew they should not come back together and that the situation had come to an end and a very sad end at that.

We thought we heard the thunder shudder through the mountains and under the rivers but nothing came of it. The house collapsed about us and the odor of decaying food crept up the stairway. And when the end came it was sad. He got up to leave, and carried a suitcase heavily strapped and a good sized canvas and a wooden frame that had been taken apart and tied together again. He took my hand and said goodnight and the car rattled off, and the one who took him remained for a long time, and later a train whistled by carrying all of him, his necktie and his ideas, his remembrances and his sense of time. I poured his staling beer out and decided to sleep on a pillow he had used but later threw it off, and slept soundly without dreaming of him at all which was unusual.

The nights became rarer and took up the sound of water and the nickle piano wouldn't play any more and the man in the telephone booth said *I'm all right, the other man was killed.*

He went away to become settled. We settled separately three ways and worked through the night when we couldn't sleep. We had our adventures that we set forth upon and before long became heroes, and were soon after defeated.

The arms from the shallow crowded beaches writhed in hideous motion. We were confronted with deformed torsos and swollen thighs and huge bellies sagging in blue suits. And the music played very loudly and the voices of hundreds of people were loud in it. When we first came to the beach there was an explosion and everyone ran toward the sound. It was a keg of beer and the people were disappointed. On a thin bench two men were kissing.

Kathleen Tankersley Young

SEVEN BOYS SIT AT NIGHT

AND morning; — it is still obscure,
a later light not fanned to heaven
to dominate the stars above the seven
who speak beside the stream and name it pure;
then, when no wholesome man
strides from his gate,
and no white rooster can
so early scintillate.

These seven do eschew the leer
that voices with the loon, the river.
So lone the aspen twirl and nightly shiver,
they dare no prepossessing laughter here,
and when each mouth is still,
but night remains,
they have not ears to will
that fear the mouth refrains.

No profligate could banter give
and at their dapper woe make merry,
much in the leafy lower coast must tarry
to mute them there, where merely crickets live.
They should have lain in sleep,
lost each in his,
and not have learned how steep
and troubled silence is.

David Cornel DeJong

BEGINNING AGAIN WITH WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS*

Writing with a sense of the history and destiny of These States — as in the epos of the Earlier Discoveries of "*In the American Grain*" — William Carlos Williams, with "*A Voyage to Pagany*"[1] impels Americans towards a Beginning. The curious as to history may find it convenient to draw a parallel between this late effort of terrifically sensitized American intellect and the earlier effort of Henry Adams in his "*Mont St. Michel and Chartres*" (1904).

Since there has been no actual contact of subject matter in the two writers, the parallel can be no more than metaphor. This granted, there remains the fact that two minds, with approximately a quarter of a century between them, have reacted as Americans, though along different lines, towards what might be termed the European unchanging — or in the words of Williams, "the ancient springs of purity and plenty."

Both writers come to Europe: Adams to the cathedrals of France to see the Virgin; Williams (among other places), to Paris, "a stitched-up woman hunting a lover."

"It must be a lover. He must come of machines, he must break through. Nothing will subdue him." So they come as lovers, both from machines. They must break through to get at what they want, since neither one nor the other will walk on Nothing. But there is a difference of twenty-four years.

Scion of his New England family, Adams voyaged, a mind replete with education, — the heart as though trip-hammered with the ineffectualness of education, — to preserve intact the spirit which in the past had preserved his family; in the end, a mind surfeited, prodigal to family, the lover in all humility, submitting (perhaps he did not know this) to his own superstructure over French Gothic mind; the spirit mortified, but somehow complete. In summary he said of it: "Of all the elaborate symbolism which has been suggested for the Gothic cathedral, the most vital and most perfect may be that the slender nervure, the springing motion of the broken arch, the leap downwards of the flying buttress — the visible effort to throw off a visible strain — never let us forget that Faith only supports it, and that, if Faith fails, Heaven is lost." [2]

---

* A postscript to Mr. Zukofsky's article on Henry Adams which appeared in the three previous issues of the Hound & Horn.

[1] *A Voyage to Pagany* — William Carlos Williams. The Macaulay Company, New York, 1928.

The new "*Voyage to Pagany*" (Pagany meaning Europe) is steered near Adams' original route. Again, what is launched is not the machine, but instinct. "One thing about the man, he never argued with his instincts." After twenty-four years, it is still the machine which persists. But no need to be mortified. Wary one must be, of course — always the check upon the instincts; America has raised one that way; but one can approach, like the Indian, circle around, and then attack. Attack, at least, with the precision of the machine become instinct.

The Ancient Beauty, yes. At Santa Croce one is penetrated, permits himself to be penetrated, past the walls of any church. But that is it, not subdued, but "purified past the walls of any church," purified for oneself, for one's own Beginning and the Beginning of one's own.[3] In general, Europe, Venice of Waters, the Pagan underneath the Christian, Giotto, Cimabue, the world's "shell of past loveliness," meet it with distrust! Learn, yes, be penetrated, become clear on all levels as with the clarity of Williams' Viennese doctors, but "close the eyes sharply to, at the height of enjoyment, at the peak of understanding." "He had strengthened his understanding of what he had long since discerned. He carried his affirmation away in his pocket — with his time-table." That is American. Old Europe may not like it. What about it? The changes have come too inevitably; Adams went to Europe to write of Mont St. Michel; Europe is considering at least one translation of "*In the American Grain*."

What this change means to the actual results of writing is clear. The "*Mont St. Michel and Chartres*" of Henry Adams, because of its author's proselyte submission in order to attain in imaginative completeness a clarity originally foreign, resolves itself into unity. What might have been a tiresome itinerary becomes a celestial Baedeker, the plan of the book chastened as the nervure of the Gothic arch. What was intended to be impersonal has the element of the personal diffused through the objectivity of design. The struggle of American mind to attain the ciborium not its own, casts the spell of tragedy through the calm of structure.

---

[2] *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*, page 383.

[3] Williams: *Spring and All*. Contact Pub. Co. 1923.

In contrast, and necessarily, the recalcitrance of William Carlos Williams in "*A Voyage to Pagany*" makes for anything but tragedy. What is intended to be a novel becomes in structure an animated itinerary. There is practically no design, since the design impelling the book is — to move on to the Beginning. There can be no lingering here for what is final, for what resolves into unity. Fact — here — impels from incident to incident, because the Beginning comes only with the finish of what is Past.

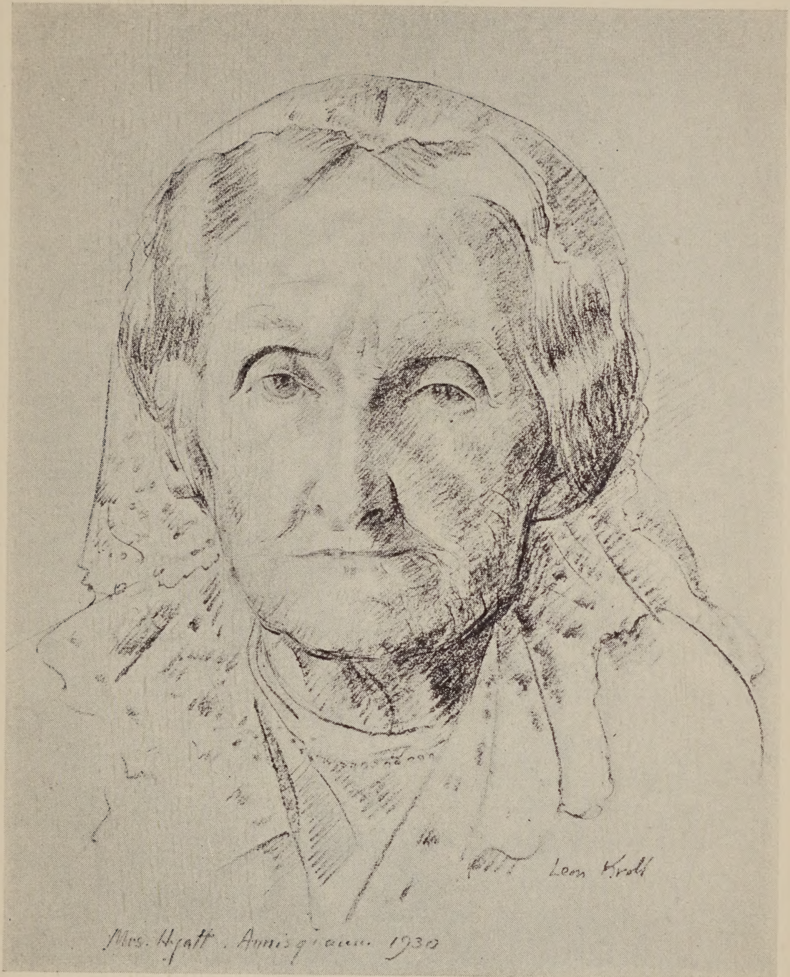
Necessarily, intellectualism is a by-product of this itinerary, and teases the imagination. Literature being at best catharsis, the author of that perfect piece in *Spring and All*, "The pure products of America go crazy," might have remained on his own ground and implied in a novel of the defeat of those "pure products," peasants, migrant laborers, substrata of These States, the defeat of intellectualism itself. The author's nature, however, seems to have compelled him otherwise, And why not? For one concerned with the Beginning, a portrait of what is closest to oneself to begin with is indispensable, since it makes for honesty — the welcome absence of premature sentiment with regard to America's peasantry — rare in recent fiction.

Furthermore, what is good in "*A Voyage to Pagany*" breaks through, — in spite of the hazards of intellect, — sees through incident, surrounds and fathoms objects: the principal character Dev, a constantly impressionable fellow, irritating himself into thought — "What does anybody find in anybody? Something he can't get except through that somebody"; the words, "What is it, dear?" composing the natural keystone of a perfect love scene; "Carcassone, a rock ruined by tears"; the tan and grime wrestling, the hair stuck together at the ends, growing from the scaly scalps, from poor soil — "; the Arno "river getting broader and going about its business"; "music a presence which you feel occasionally during the playing"; of Bach's St. Matthew Passion — "I heard him agonizing, I saw him *inside*, not cold but he *lived* and I was possessed by his passion."

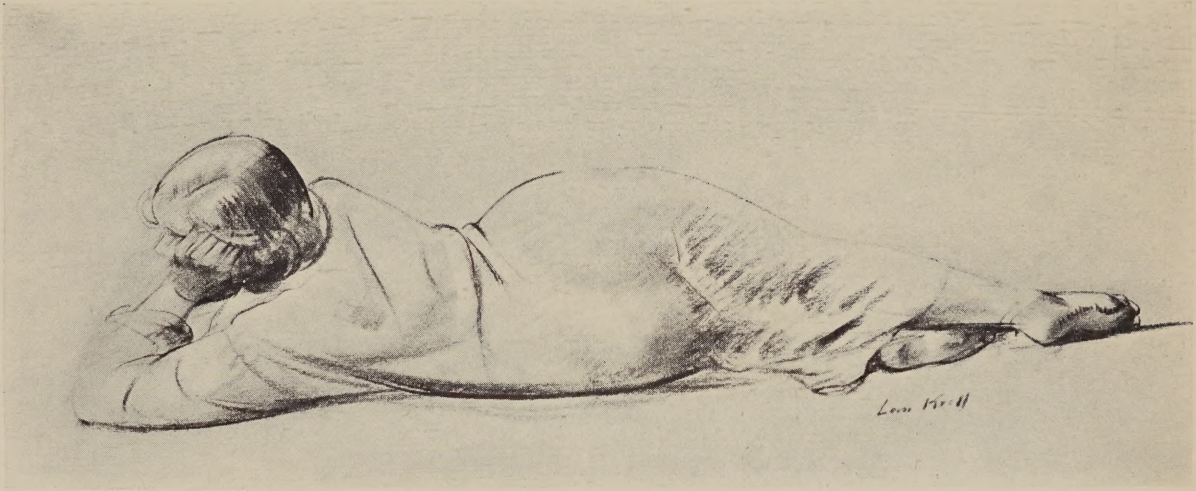
Why continue to quote? Americans might do no better than to emulate the Europeans, and consider the portrait of what is at least their own Beginning — carefully.

Louis Zukofsky
(Oct. 9, 1928.)

M. Charles Henry, 1926 Leon Kroll



Mrs. Hyatt, 1930 Leon Kroll



Babette, 1930

Leon Kroll

Miss Hale, 1930 Leon Kroll

ART CHRONICLE

On the Imitation of Nature

A little while ago I was looking at some of Leon Kroll's drawings, and it struck me that if François Clouet could see them he would not consider that draughtsmanship had gone utterly to the dogs. Their humility before the object admits them to the great classic tradition of the imitation of nature. Their life springs from the artist's struggles to derive a formal pattern out of the idiosyncrasies of his sitter without sacrificing anything from either the beauty of his pattern or from the individual life of the sitter. The artist's loyalty to his formal pattern saves these drawings from being photographic, and his loyalty to his sitter saves them from being decorations. This double loyalty is rare, even in Leon Kroll's own work, and all but unique in our painting of to-day. (Perhaps less rare in our sculpture?)

The imitation of nature is the practise that keeps an art fresh and stops its falling asleep in manual repetition. (Egyptian art, for instance, could never have lived out its three thousand years if the convenience of the departed souls had not required portraiture as exact as tailoring. The dead inhabited their statues in order to communicate with the world, and to be comfortable the statues had to fit. Egyptian statues are so alive because the sculptor had to study his model exactly in order to make them as useful as telephones.) We take pleasure in a classic work of art (or a healthy one, as Goethe liked to say) because we share in the artist's surprise at some fresh aspect that his scrutiny discovers in some common object in nature, and we share in his exhilaration at being able to deduce a formal pattern from the object. The discovery, like discoveries in love, comes from the anxiousness of the scrutiny. A classic work of art is a victory of man's subtlety in ensnaring the infinity of nature with most finite means (with words and rhyme, dabs of paint, etc.). The artist stands like little David with nothing but his pebble and his knack to sling it. The exhilaration of this victory grows the more intense as the artist is able to seize all the essentials of more fleeting things in more formal patterns. This exhilaration is what keeps the work of art alive, and generates the electricity by which, in archaic Greek sculpture for instance, we seem stabbed.

Nothing can replace the scrutiny of nature, and by nature I mean whatever a man experiences from without, be it a voice over the telephone, falling in love, sunlight in the street, the human body, something read in a book. I prefer to call this nature rather than experience because the artist's scrutiny is directed first at the object, and only afterward, during the making of the work of art, at the artist's impression of the object. The object may range from a Cézanne apple to the theological concepts of the Byzantines, since objects are variously real to various epochs. We, for instance, cannot recreate Byzantine painting because we cannot feel any reality in Byzantine theology. The Byzantines could not have painted Cézanne's apples because they saw apples as far less real objects than the Epiphany. Probably the greatness of a man or an age depends on the degree of spirituality felt as a pressing presence.

Perhaps the artist cannot be taught to look at nature, but he can be taught to make a pattern—indeed, he must have learned how to make a pattern before he can profit by his scrutiny of nature. Tintoretto was undoubtedly wise in never letting his pupils study from life until they had learned to trace drawings by great masters. This copying gave them a traditional language or pattern through which to express the world they saw.

In late epochs, however, the traditional pattern can become so competent to deal with the stock subjects of the epoch that it makes the artist lazy about looking at the world. Then only a heroic conscientiousness can keep his eye on the object, a conscientiousness such as that which drove Shakespeare to derive a fresh verse pattern, even a fresh language, from the subject of each particular play. This subject so saturates the pattern that not even a grace note will fit in any other play. (The same play could never include both: "I'll dig thee pignuts with my nails and snare The nimble marmoset" and "Words, words, words.") Few artists are so strenuous in despoiling themselves. A Bolognese painter of the Seicento could concoct an altar almost without looking off his canvas or meditating on his subject, simply by combining Titian's color, Michelangelo's anatomy, Veronese's pomp, Tintoretto's exclamation, etc., etc. Guido Reni astonished a visitor to his studio by drawing a seraphical angel while looking at a hideous old man model. However, when the Seicento painters had to make portraits, the necessity for getting a likeness forced them to look at the object, since no traditional pattern can cover the aberrations of individuals. This study of the object, this imitation of nature in the most literal sense, accounts for the unforgettable portraits made by such painters of learned allegories and boring altar pieces as Bernardo Strozzi and Guido Reni. Antique Roman portrait busts are similarly the latest signs of life among too much learning. We of to-day are as jaded with learning as Augustan Rome or the Seicento, though by no means as skilful. Our painters have learned to make concoctions of Cézanne's volume, Manet's brushwork, Degas' ambushed angles of vision, etc. (or any other set, for our choice can range over a wider variety than ever before known). Yet our few portraits remain remarkably alive, as these drawings of Leon Kroll's show. Paul Manship is the perfect type of a late artist, with his expert neo-Attic ornaments that might be by Pasiteles, and his incisive strict portraits that look eye to eye at Romans.

. . .

MODERN AMERICAN PAINTERS. *By Samuel M. Kootz. Brewer & Warren.* 1930. $5. (64 *pp. of text and* 60 *plates.*)

For some reason this book makes much the same impression as the American Caravan. If I could only define the horrible bond they share, I would know what we are, where and, maybe even why. For one thing, both books are shy of persons. Of Samuel Kootz's 60 illustrations, only 14 are figure pieces or portraits. So much still life gives the effect of arid calisthenics, of the daily dozen that supples up a dancer for his real work. (Only, where is the real work?) And for another thing, both books left me in deep and abdominal gloom.

It is not that Mr. Kootz is unintelligent, for he often makes very acute remarks, as when he says: "As a measure toward finding themselves, American painters must realize, as Mexican artists have realized, that the subject is as essential as the style, that it is from the model a picture must derive its intensity, as well as its form, design and color." The trouble is that Mr. Kootz lacks historical background, as shown by his fabulous summary of the wamblings of mankind before the Coming of Modern Art. Also (or therefore?) he has no criterion around which to organize what he sees. He measures American painters by each other (which is meaningless) instead of by the dead (which is perhaps the wisdom of despair?).

His selection of painters would not be my selection were I to attempt such a book, but differences of taste are inevitable and probably unimportant. It is good that the book was made, for these paintings, when seen together, surprise one by showing some kind of unity, just as the stories and poems in the Caravan, no matter whether written in Oklahoma or Maine, all shared a sub-adult nostalgia. And then the book publishes most illuminating letters from some of the painters, showing how acutely self conscious they are. Max Weber especially has some most interesting remarks. If our American art dealers had a grain of sense they would subsidize a series of cheap little books, such as the French put out, each book containing some dozen small cuts of one artist's work, prefaced by a few remarks by himself, or poems, or a letter, or anything to convey his credo in his own words. Such a series of pamphlets would do worlds toward clearing up our ideas. The French ones sell by thousands all over the world and have contributed as much as anything else toward making French painting aware of itself and recognized.

• • •

L'EGLISE DE RAMPILLON. *By Achille Carlier.* 103 *pages of text and* 100 *plates* (*Paris*, 7 *rue Péguy*, VI). 200 *francs.*

This book is worth reviewing for two reasons: because it is the first important work by the post-war generation of French scholars, and because it is extraordinarily good. We have often wondered who would succeed to the great generation of Enlart and Male, and here is the beginning of our answer. Carlier has absorbed their researches and their fervor and he is, besides, a brilliant architect. His book, therefore, has their knowledge and their clarity, with an added something: the insight that only a workman has on his work.

Rampillon was built in the late 13th century. The statues and reliefs for its two portals were sculptured at one of the great workshops of the day and sent to the church fully carved. They were as carefully and as beautifully made as if for one of the great cathedrals. Almost no other late 13th century series of apostles is as varied and expressive as these. Time and again one is reminded of Rheims. The insignificance of the village of Rampillon saved its church from the destruction of the Revolution. Like other towns of the region, Provins and St. Loup de Naud, it has been forgotten by everyone save a very few lovers of the "art français." This book makes it for the first time accessible to the general public.

When Carlier first "discovered" these sculptures, he had no intention of writing about them. He was surprised to find such masterpieces so little known, and quite unphotographed, and so he set his camera to work. After some months at the task, it seemed a pity not to share his results, and so the book grew the only way a book should grow, from the necessity of love.

The plates are the same size and make-up as Houvet's photographs of Chartres, although on better paper. Carlier's devotion is even more sensitive than Houvet's; he is probably one of the three or four men living who know how to photograph sculpture. Each piece is seen from its inevitable angle, from the angle that its great and forgotten sculptor must have preferred. There is no trick photography, only the truth of the overcast, soft weather of Brie, to bring out the stamp of each stone glance, the firmness and the fervor. After studying this book, living people look less alive, less *aware* than these stones. It is greatly to be hoped that Carlier will continue with other monuments, perhaps St. Loup de Naud.

A. Hyatt Mayor

ARCHITECTURE CHRONICLE

A Variety of Remarks

The devil and the Daily News Building dare not smile. A grim earnestness pervades them both. To quote from the architect Raymond Hood:

"When I say that in designing the News Building the first and almost dominant consideration was utility, I realize that I am laying myself open to a variety of remarks and reflections from my fellow architects." This, then, is the challenge of Utility. It deserves consideration.

The ground plan is admittedly bad. A round room four stories high, lined with black glass and pink and turquoise theatricals, effectively obstructs the building proper. Entrance to the elevators is finally achieved by a small diagonal passage, more directly accessible to the "west entrance," which is an alley. This round room, four stories high, a "small explosion of architectural effect at the entrance and in the lobby, where they gave us only one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to spend," is expressed on the exterior by a square granite slab, also four stories high, etched with cartoons and inscriptions, all integrally bound into the material itself and entirely illegible.

As a result of the "small explosion":

(a) The entrance lobby must be artificially lighted.

(b) These four stories most accessible from the street are wasted.

(c) "Circulation" is impeded.

"The zoning laws and first-class office requirements practically dictated the plan, the mass and the fenestration. The office space has a uniform depth of 27 feet from the exterior wall, and is lighted by regularly spaced windows 4 feet 4 inches wide, one window every 9 feet. At no place, even at the corners of the building, was this uniform fenestration varied, as it was the intention to create what has been shown by experience to be the best and most flexible space for high-class office rental."

That is to say, the floors are arranged in the usual order for this class of building, with a single important exception. Each window is separated from the next by a pier 4 feet 8 inches wide. Half of these are necessary; the other half are faked. The result is a pattern of vertical stripes on the exterior at a cost of one third the available light. It may be objected that extra piers were inserted to facilitate division into offices. But in that case four inches would have been sufficient. It is interesting to note that on the rear, where effect had not to be maintained, this system was actually modified and here we find three windows set closely together between each structural pier with a very evident diminution of verticality on the exterior.

"So the exterior more or less created itself."

That is, having determined on a vertical pattern, the architect changed the color of the brick spandrels from white to pink, inserted among these bricks another pattern and more ornament, projected the piers beyond this window surface, and sublimated his windows and floor levels into vague gray stripes.

"Arriving at the top, . . . I tried the simple expedient of stopping without searching for or causing the owner to pay for an effect."

Here is the Daily News Building's chief claim to modernity. "Architectural effect," synonymous with conspicuous expense, in this case one hundred and fifty thousand dollars has been reserved for the monumental lobby. The grotesqueries of the Radiator Building and the Chicago Tribune Tower, two earlier buildings by the same architect, are definitely eschewed. How then to deny the water tank and elevator machinery? The simple expedient is to house them both in a box-like structure built out to the dimensions of the building proper and camouflaged with red brick and white piers to simulate and carry up to nothingness the already simulated buttress and slot effect of the stories below.

This, then, is the modernity of the Daily News Building. It has no top.

And this must be the sum of Mr. Hood's Utility. That having once founded an untruth, further evasions become for him constantly easier and more essential. Dishonesty of purpose has bred a false exterior. The step from windows that are vertical channels and floors that are set on edge to a crowning skyline that is both of these and yet neither of them is one of degree alone.

And the whole is a monstrous pile, vicious in its pretended nakedness, sinister because its only human attributes, its windows and floors, its plumbing and machinery, all, are twisted into an arbitrary dogma, the Reduction to Absurdity of an architectural formula.

Elroy Webber

Note. — Since the above was written Mr. Raymond Hood has made the following comment concerning another of his buildings:

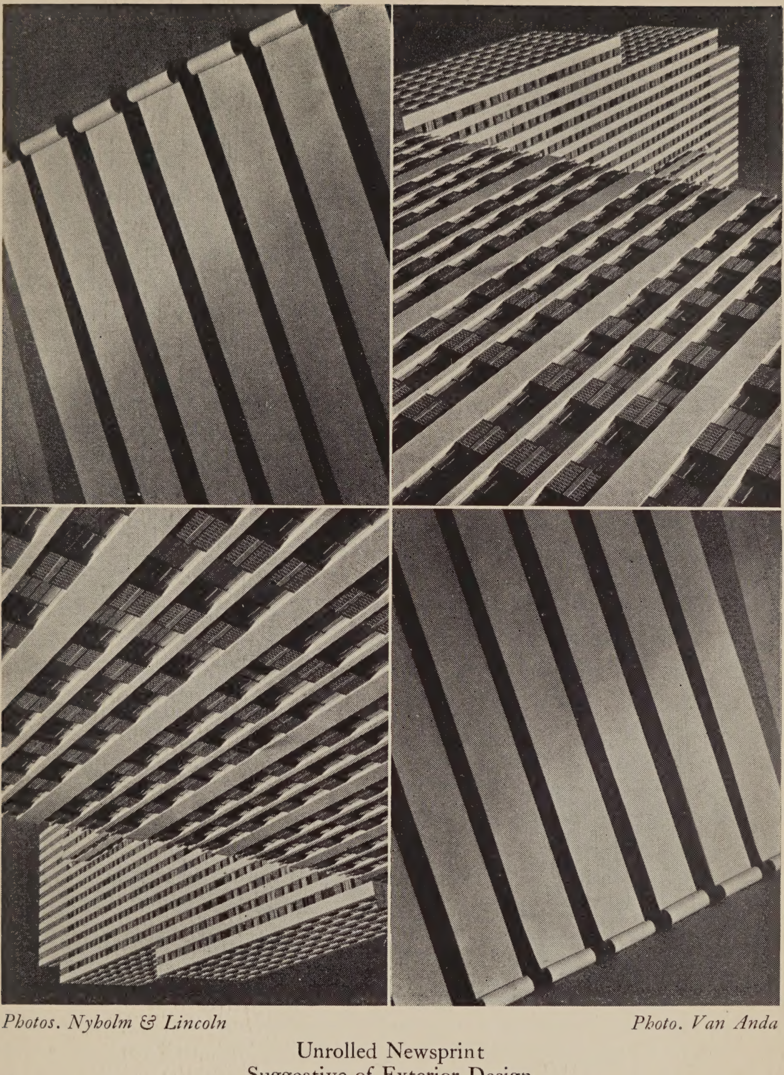
"It was impossible to fit any of the ordinary motifs of conventional architecture to the exterior without compromising the arrangement and plans of the rooms that had been so carefully studied. Windows came in the wrong place.

"So this camouflage treatment was tried as an experiment, but at the same time as an experiment which seemed worth while making. It has unified the house.

"The irregularities that might annoy some people have disappeared under the pattern and the color is not unpleasant.

"After all, camouflage in architecture is not a thing that was born with the World War. Camouflage has always existed in a very real way, but it has been a much more serious and tragic business than is this camouflage of paint." — *New York Times*, November 16, 1929.

Could there be a franker confession of Architectural Impotence?



Photos. Nyholm & Lincoln *Photo. Van Anda*

Unrolled Newsprint
Suggestive of Exterior Design

The News Building

John M. Howells, Raymond M. Hood
Associated, Architects

(*Photograph and title from "The News Building" by Raymond Hood: Architectural Forum for November, 1930*)

MOVIE CHRONICLE

The Style of Ernst Lubitsch

The manner of movies like "Honey," "Montana Moon" and "Love Comes Along" might have been developed for some permanent use in the talkies; but the musical romance now appears to have been completely abandoned. As a method, the musical romance was not wholly successful. Songs came as interludes and pauses, not as episodes in the action, and they contributed nothing to the movement of the picture. They began and continued and stopped; then whatever action was intended went forward. The songs were never direct, witty comments on what was at hand, any more than songs are in musical comedies on the stage. The musical romance's principal virtue, aside from the fact that it solved the difficulty of getting songs into a movie without the background of stage life, was that the songs were sometimes catchy; besides, no one minded the distraction.

It remained for Ernst Lubitsch, in the recent "Monte Carlo," to demonstrate what could have been done with the musical romance, even as he demonstrated the prime use of the moving camera. "The Love Parade" represented his first efforts in making music a definite, emphatic part of a picture. Movies are unable to reproduce all sounds: there must be, instead, a singling out, an emphasis. In most movies, there is a necessary singling out of sounds, but no emphasis: an orchestra plays, a door slams, but without meaning.

In "The Love Parade," Lubitsch placed his music cues to set the rhythm of a scene, so that the song's words came finally not as a break in the action, but as its climax. The music was unobtrusive and sly, an overture to the events that were warming up, and an accompaniment for the gestures of the actors. Lupino Lane's opening song snapped the picture off as if it had been flung out by a rubber-band; Chevalier's singing of "Nobody's Using It Now" seemed the only end to a series of exasperations. When a song, like "Paris, Please Stay the Same," came in the middle of an episode, Lubitsch did not let it die but multiplied its effects, not in the usual romping, stamping chorus manner, but as a comic mood to carry the farce that much farther. Nothing was out of place, an airplane's roar, the chiming of a clock, the clatter of feet down steps.

"Monte Carlo" carried the methods of "The Love Parade" even further. Objects about the players, an engine rushing through the countryside, the figure in a clock-tower, became the instruments of musical and amusing comment. Sounds and music, in "Monte Carlo," perform the same function for the ear that the camera does for the eye; an auditory breadth and inclusiveness is achieved that could not possibly be obtained in any other representational art. The episode in which the engine's flying wheels introduce the dramatic mood of a song Jeanette MacDonald is on the point of singing and musically sustain the visual and auditory effect of swift motion, is nothing short of a masterpiece of sound direction. In a sense, the episode can be called one of "sound montage," a stylistic method which leaves no effect unsupplied to the spectator. A German film called "Zwei Herzen im Drei-Viertel Takt" attempted to gain some of the effects of "Monte Carlo," but failed precisely where Lubitsch succeeded: in blending sounds with the visual pattern. If other directors would study Lubitsch's more simple exercise in the Apache scene, played by Maurice Chevalier and Evelyn Brent, of "Paramount on Parade," they could learn much in the way of sound technique.

Yet it is almost accurate to say that none of Lubitsch's methods are completely original. His success lies in the fact that he develops the possibilities inherent in the medium; and this development is occasioned as much by a recognition of the limits of the medium as of its extent. He knows the simple canon that sound in the movies cannot hope to be realistic, and, accordingly, he does not strive for realism.

As a craftsman, Lubitsch is, perhaps, not as daring as Eisenstein. His editing is strictly narrative in manner; each shot progresses to another, like sentences in a paragraph. The Eisenstein method of treating each shot as a "cell," a part of a cluster, Lubitsch uses not at all. Scenes do not burst upon one in a Lubitsch picture as they do in an Eisenstein picture. They come, instead, in simple succession. The shock, the exclamatory and dot-dot-dot effect is completely lacking in Ernst Lubitsch's work; again the see-saw editing of David Wark Griffith, noticeable in Sheridan's ride in "Lincoln," is absent. What is present, however, is a positive style, obtained in terms of the relating of large objects within a single frame to one another; for example, his use of soft grey lights and walls in the Heidelburg scenes of "The Student Prince" and the more sombre grey and black in the palace scenes; the counter-balancing, moving groups of figures within an immense space, while the isolated, doomed Czar, in "The Patriot," flees from assassination. In his comedies his camera flies from a playful attention to detail, gloves, slippers, cigarettes, up to the individuals whose manner they expose, and back again; his camera moves constantly to obtain speed, impressiveness, or dramatic pause.

In his comedies and his serious pictures, Lubitsch is inclined to use rapid movement from room to room to create suspense or amusement. He employs it again and again, in "Forbidden Paradise," "The Patriot," "The Marriage Circle." It is almost his most outstanding characteristic. In a way his sound technique has the flowing continuity that his camera obtains for the eye. He can depend on it, in its various forms, no matter what the nature of his subject matter. He has developed, in other words, a style which can be amplified and varied to any needs it may have to meet. And it is as distinctly a movie style as that of Griffith or Eisenstein.

It is doubtful if Lubitsch's style has ever had the magnificent fluidity that there was in the player-piano scene in von Stroheim's "Greed." Certainly, Lubitsch is a smoother director than von Stroheim, and, at times, a more perfect director. But in comparison these two directors are on more even ground than any other two. There are scenes, especially in the early part of "Greed," that Lubitsch could easily have directed; certain portions of "The Merry Widow" are conceivable as Lubitsch's own. Both directors have an ability to make otherwise incompetent actors have some grace before the camera. What is missing from Ernst Lubitsch's work is the heaviness of von Stroheim's "Foolish Wives" and "The Wedding March." Lubitsch's moods are more numerous: the sweet sentiment of "The Student Prince," the sparkle of "Lady Windermere's Fan" and "The Marriage Circle"; the movement of crowds in "The Loves of Pharoah." Von Stroheim's "Greed" and Lubitsch's "The Patriot" remain, in company with a few others, silent movies of high excellence. Unfortunately Lubitsch is alone in his splendid developments of sound technique in "The Love Parade" and "Monte Carlo."

KENNETH WHITE.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editors
THE HOUND & HORN
New York, N. Y.
Sir:

At the end of my review of *Anabase*, in your Fall issue, I wrote of St.-J. Perse, "his language itself seems *indisponible* for any vision but the vision of this Anabasis." An obliging proofreader transformed my *indisponible* — a useful French word difficult of apt rendering in English — into *indispensable*, an English word with, I need not say, a totally different meaning. I was made by the proofreader to say something so very far from intelligible, not to say far from true, that the readers of HOUND & HORN may be presumed to have suspected this to be a howler. Yet, I deserve perhaps to have it made clear that the howler was not mine. What I said was in effect that St.-J. Perse's language was peculiarly adapted to only this vision, seemed not available for any other; what I was made to say was that it was indispensable for any vision *but* this Anabasis, — which passes the extremest limit of absurdity.

I am, etc., LEWIS GALANTIERE

Editors of
THE HOUND & HORN,
Sirs:

The review by Wheelwright[1] in the last H. & H. contains what seems to be an error of fact. He mentions The American Academy building in Rome as having been designed by McKim. Perhaps it was, but I doubt it, for the following reasons:

McKim died in 1908. The Villa Aurelia property on the Janiculum was deeded to The Academy in 1912. The academy building was erected in 1914. It is not certainly recalled in McKim's office who designed the building, but it is believed that it is the work of Mitchel Kendal.

And while I think of it, Nijinsky's[2] tights in his famous dance wherein he impersonates a faun or satyr were designed not after the bole of a birch tree but a sycamore — or plane.

Yours,
WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

---

[1] "Cinque Cento Charles," Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 138.
[2] "The Diaghilev Period," Vol. III, No. 4, p. 473.

BOOK REVIEWS

MUSIC FIT FOR THE ODES

A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS. *By Ezra Pound. Paris: the Hours Press:* 1930. (*Edition limited to 212 copies.* $10.00.)

A thoughtless reading of the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound suggests two criticisms, both attractively easy and both superficial. The first of these is that the poem is incomprehensible, a perverse mystification; the second, that it is structurally and melodically amorphous, not a poem but a macaronic chaos. Since my space is limited, I have thought it best to attempt little formal criticism in this review, and to address myself chiefly to a discussion of these two fundamental objections; and since the former is dependent largely upon a misapprehension of Mr Pound's poetical technic, I shall comment first upon the structure, melodic and rhythmic, of the poem.

A key to Mr Pound's method is to be found in his discussion of what he calls 'horizontal music,' in his essay on George Antheil.[1] The valid æsthetic ideal, he observes,

> . . . aims at focusing the mind on a given definition of form, or rhythm, so intensely that it becomes not only more aware of that given form, but more sensitive to all other forms, rhythms, defined planes, or masses. It is a scaling of eye-balls, a castigating or purging of aural cortices; a sharpening of verbal apperceptions. . . .[2]

Music, even as late as Bach, was counterpoint ('horizontal'), rather than harmony ('perpendicular'); that is to say, the emphasis was laid upon the melodic line, upon the simultaneous management of two or more melodic lines, until 'counterpoint' slumped into 'harmony, Lutheran chorales, &c., and progressively into Schönberg, [and] this fundamental drive in music was obscured.'[3] Melody — whether of music or of verse — is a combination of what Mr

---

[1] *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony* (Covici: 1927).

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 44.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

Pound calls *raga* (toneless rhythm-arrangement) and *tala* (the sequence of notes at determined pitches). 'Harmony,' the decadent music after Bach, denies *raga* in its preoccupation with *tala:* its tendency is towards a stasis, which rapidly becomes a stagnation. It is no longer active; it is 'atmospheric' (Debussy, Schönberg). The same thing has happened, to even a greater extent, in poetry. The worker in verbal rhythms is denied the possibility of counterpoint (except an artificial counterpoint of echoing and anticipating), and unless he is as careful of the timing as he is of the pitch of his tone-sequences, his verse, like music, will stagnate; lacking motion, it will be inactive, dead.

The motion of Mr Pound's melodic line is the motion of a frieze. He has described it exactly in a passage in the twenty-fifth Canto:

> notes as facets of air,
> and the mind there, before them, moving,
> so that the notes needed not move.

Whether the music passes across the mind, or the mind traverses the music, is immaterial; the important fact is the motion. But the frieze has depth as well as motion. That is to say, there is counterpoint, and there is harmony. What Mr Pound calls 'echo-counterpoint' is managed in various ways; the most obvious device is that of the repetition of pitch and rhythm — 'imitation' — and may be observed at its best in such a passage as this, from Canto IV:

> And by the curved, carved foot of the couch,
>   claw-foot and lion head, an old man seated
> Speaking in the low drone. . . .
>   Ityn!
> Et ter flebiliter, Ityn, Ityn!
> And she went toward the window and cast her down,
>   "All the while, the while, swallows crying:
> Ityn!
>   "It is Cabestan's heart in the dish,
>   "It is Cabestan's heart in the dish?
>   "No other taste shall change this."
> And she went toward the window,
>   the slim white stone bar
> Making a double arch;
> Firm even fingers held to the firm pale stone;

Swung for a moment,
                    and the wind out of Rhodez
Caught in the full of her sleeve.
                    . . . the swallows crying:
'Tis. 'Tis. Ytis!

It is hardly necessary to call attention to the echoing of cadences, the recurrent flow of the melody, 'weightless . . . but moving, so that sound runs upon sound';[4] what is less obvious, but no less important, is the subtle management of pause (*raga*), the breaking and refashioning of rhythm, indicated with a musician's exactness by the broken lines, the indentations, and the spacing. In spite of its chaotic appearance on the page, the notation is as precise as it can ever be outside of music.[5]

The contrapuntal effect is complex, but the harmonic is even more intricate. It is a harmony not only of sound, but of image. The former quality is, like the counterpoint, achieved by iteration, by imitation, by a sort of recessive flooding of the phrase with the echoes and associations that have gone before; only, it is denser than the counterpoint, and static: motion is retarded, there is a piling up of resonances; the exact musical analogue is the resolution of cadence into chord:

(*a*) And all the while, the while, swallows crying

(*b*) Lokka vat youah Trotzsk is done, ϵ ιss
                    madeh deh zhamefull beace!!
      "He iss madeh deh zhamefull beace, iss he?
                    "He is madeh de zhamevul beace?"

It is more difficult to define what I have referred to as the 'harmony of the image,' because it is not sonal; it is apprehensible intellectually and emotionally, but it can not be 'heard.' Perhaps I can clarify my meaning by suggesting that the poet uses each image, or each detail of the image, precisely as the musician employs a note, or single pitch. Monolinear verse, then — *ψιλὴ μουςική*, — would be a single strand of images, or 'scenes,' in juxtaposition; a single melodic line. But if this line is treated, for image, as we have seen that the line may be treated for counterpoint and harmony — that is to say, if the image is broken, echoed back and forth, or adequated substantially or kinetically by another image, the result will be the intellectual equivalent of the metrical and melodic effects I have mentioned.

---

[4] Canto XXVII.

[5] The nuances of lineation and spacing have never been sufficiently appreciated. How much of the pother attending the criticism of certain of E. E. Cummings' lyrics, for instance, would be avoided if the critics were to consider the poet's apparent eccentricities of typography as attempts at musical notation! So far as I know, only Mr Robert Graves has fully realized this.

Manipulation of the Image has this advantage over manipulation of the mélos: it is possible, by a constant fluid intermingling of scenes, ideas, and associations, to make the single strand so flexible, so complex, as to achieve what is to all intents and purposes a true counterpoint, the simultaneous development of two or more lines of image-melody. This particular kind of counterpoint could be illustrated only by long quotation; the curious will find in Canto XXIII, with its parallel treatment of the Homeric and Renascence images, an excellent example. But the harmonization of the image is easier to illustrate. This is from the same Canto:

> And that was when Troy was down, all right,
>   superbo Ilion. . . .
> And they were sailing along
> Sitting in the stern-sheets,
> Under the lee of an island
> And the wind drifting off from the island.
> "Tet, tet . . .
>   what is it?" said Anchises.
> "Tethnéké," said the helmsman, "I think they
> "Are howling because Adonis died virgin."
> "Huh! tet . . ." said Anchises,
>   "well, they've made a bloody mess of that city."

Here the chord is exceptionally rich. It is a harmonization of several daringly dissident tones: the romantic ballad ('when Troy was down') *plus* the contemporary colloquial ('all right,' 'a bloody mess') *plus* the epic ('superbo Ilion'), and so forth; and of several attitudes, no less antipathetic: the prosaic ('And they were sailing along / Sitting in the stern-sheets'), the 'poetic' ('superbo Ilion . . .'; 'and the wind drifting off from the island'), and the ironic, which approaches burlesque (Anchises' stumbling over '*tethnéké;*

'well, they've made a bloody mess of that city'). All of these tones and attitudes entail their own associations, which will be different for each reader. The whole passage is a single image, or, better, an image-chord composed of synthesized details. It is a note in the line of the poem, and at the same time a confluence of various lines of tone and emotion. An example of the inversion of the same device is the finely wrenched dissonance upon which Canto XXIV ends:

> "Is it likely Divine Apollo
> That I should have stolen your cattle?
> A child of my age, a mere infant,
>   And besides, I have been here all night in my crib."
> "Albert made me, Tura painted my wall,
> And Julia the countess sold to a tannery. . . ."

I have said that the rhythmic balance of individual verses is carefully arranged and accurately noted. This is demonstrable by quotation. What is not demonstrable is the fact that as the individual verse is to the complete cadence, so is the single Canto to the poem as a whole. And as the impasto of detail, or synthesis of contributing images, is to the Image, so is the Image to the Canto, and to the entire scheme. And this raises the question implicit in the first objection. What is the purpose of *XXX Cantos?*

Good poetry, as Mr Pound has pointed out,[6] is always an assertion. It may be affirmative assertion (assent), or negative assertion (dissent); but it is always assertion. Negative assertion is invective or satire — both methods are used in the Cantos (see particularly the *Inferno* passages, Cantos XIV and XV), — and it differs from affirmative assertion only in direction. Whether affirmative or negative, the attitude must be positive; that is to say, it must be active. Bad poetry is the poetry of inertia, or of complaint, or of evasion; confronted by the hateful, it denies the existence of the hateful, or it deplores the hateful, or it disregards the hateful and concentrates upon something more agreeable. In any case, it denies reality; it 'does nothing'; whereas good poetry is always the poetry of action.

Taken as a whole, the Cantos illustrate this assertive attitude.

---

[6] In the essay on Henry James; quoted by Zukofsky: 'Les Cantos d'Ezra Pound,' in *Echanges*, numéro 3 (Paris: juin 1930).

The documentation, which at first sight seems so confusing, is simply the affirmation, by means of the recording of facts, of the desirable and undesirable elements of experience. The whole matter is summed up in Canto XIII, the 'image' of Kung and his advisers. Here, Kung is the truly wise man who can approve of each of his counsellors' advice because

> They have all answered correctly,
> That is to say, each in his nature;

'that is to say,' each has affirmed a positive value, though it be no more 'philosophical' than Tseu-lou's

> I would put the defences in order,

or any more 'practical' than the advice of Tian the poet:

> And Tian said, with his hand on the strings of his lute,
> The low sounds continuing
>   after his hand left the strings,
> And the sound went up like smoke, under the leaves,
> And he looked after the sound:
>   "The old swimming hole,
> "And the boys flopping off the planks,
> "Or sitting in the underbrush playing mandolins."

But Kung's rebuke falls upon Yuan Jang, his elder, — Yuan Jang being the falsely wise man, the recessive contemplative, the type of intellectual *abisma*, sitting by the roadside 'pretending to be receiving wisdom.' This man answers nothing according to his nature. For action he has substituted the meditation of 'wisdom'; perhaps he has written on the New Humanism, — I don't know; but I am certain that he teaches school, lectures on Beauty and the Eternal Values, and advises his boys to shun the 'sordid things of life.' However that may be, he is bad poetry:

> And Kung said
>   "You old fool, come out of it,
> "Get up and do something useful."
>   And Kung said,
> "Respect a child's faculties
> "From the moment it inhales the clear air,
> "But a man of fifty who knows nothing
>   "Is worthy of no respect."

'Get up and do something useful!' And what is useful? Whatever is 'in your nature': that is to say, whatever is positive. Above all things, it is necessary to be yourself, as the cant phrase has it; and the word to be italicized is 'be.' This is what Kung calls character, or 'order':

> And Kung said, "Without character you will
> be unable to play on that instrument,
> Or to execute the music fit for the Odes."

And what is the music fit for the Odes? What is the subject fit for poetry? Again, the assertion of a positive; which, in the Cantos, is the record of the fact, the Image, which is always significant so long as it is true:

> The blossoms of the apricot
> blow from the east to the west,
> And I have tried to keep them from falling.

It seems to me that the two most important elements of Mr Pound's æsthetic are summed up in Kung's observations: his insistence upon *character: order: the assertive attitude;* and his affirmation of the final value of the fact, or Image.

Confronted by this array of scenes and allusions exhumed from dead mythologies and forgotten literatures, of references to experience whose interest is limited to a contemporary few, the thoughtless reader will throw up his hands and exclaim, 'But what is it all *about?* I don't *know* enough to be able to understand this poem. Who is Sigismondo Malatesta? Who is Actaeon? Who is Pierre Vidal? But *I* don't know Latin, Greek, Italian, Provençal! Who was Myo Cid, and what has he got to do with Ruth Elder?' But this is the wrong approach, based upon a misconception not only of the nature of the *Cantos*, but of all pure poetry; and the reader who persists in it may as well take Mr Pound's advice and 'go back and read Tennyson.' In the first place, our baffled friend is misusing the word 'understand.' He is mistakenly assuming that because a tremendous amount of erudition has gone into the making of the poem, the poem must remain an unsoluble puzzle to those who lack an equal amount of erudition with which to unravel the allusions. This, however, is not reading the poem as a poem, but as a sort of historico-archæological cypher. It is as much as to say that no-one can understand Strawinsky's *Sacre*, for instance, who has not (1) a technician's knowledge of musical theory, (2) an anatomist's knowledge of the muscles brought into play during the dance, (3) a painter's knowledge of pigmentation and décor-designing, and (4) an anthropologist's knowledge of ancient Russian folk-rites. '*Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*,' writes Jean Cocteau,[7] 'à cause de leur franchise, déçoivent davantage qu'une pièce ésotérique. Le mystère inspire au public une sorte de crainte. Ici je renonce au mystère. J'allume tout, je souligne tout. Vide du dimanche, bétail humain, expressions toutes faites, dissociations d'idées en chair et en os, férocité de l'enfance, poésie et miracle de la vie quotidienne: voilà ma pièce. . . .' 'I have no desire,' Mr Pound observes,[8] 'either for needless mystery, or for writing equally needless explanations.' (It is to be noted that Mr T. S. Eliot, by appending apparently 'explanatory' notes to the text of *The Waste Land*, obscured what was otherwise perfectly clear because he seemed to suggest that participation in his erudition was essential for the 'understanding' of his poetry.) Obviously, technical information will help in reading the *Cantos;* it will add a certain richness to the enjoyment, just as information in the fields I have mentioned above will add richness to the enjoyment of the *Sacre;* but no amount of information will bring the reader nearer to the solution of the puzzle. For there is no puzzle.

Mr Pound's documentation is a device, a technic. History and literature are for him a mine of images, and his purpose is to fix certain of these images in a lasting, orderly design, without reference to a philosophy or to any system of teleological principles. Now whether the historical fact, the Image, be the blowing of apricot-blossoms from east to west, or a narcotic charge preferred against Frank Robert Iriquois of Oklahoma City, or the departure of Anchises from Troy, it is a detail of supreme importance to the frieze, a note of supreme importance to the mélos, which is the poem as a whole. The poet, as I have observed, uses images precisely as another poet would use metaphors or, even more simply, chromatic words. These images have no hidden 'meaning.' Malatesta, Frank

---

[7] *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel: préface de 1922.*

[8] Note to the Cantos published in THE HOUND & HORN, Vol. III, no. 3 [Spring, 1930].

Robert Iriquois, the apricot-blossoms, are no more 'puzzling' than Shakespeare's 'encarnadine' in the verse about the multitudinous seas. It is true that if you have enough Latin to be able to associate 'encarnadine' with 'flesh,' 'carnation,' and the other rich warm *carn* — words, you will derive more enjoyment from the verse than will X, who knows only that 'encarnadine' is a euphuism for 'redden'; but you will 'understand' the verse not a whit better than your less informed friend. Therefore, the criticism that *XXX Cantos* is incomprehensible, is a false criticism; and I have gone into it at some length simply because it seems to be the objection that is being most strongly urged against the poem. The *Cantos* will baffle persons who are willing to be baffled; but this is so in the case of any considerable poem.

The *Cantos* may be described as an epic of timelessness. That is to say, the poem represents Mr Pound's endeavour to manage an arrest of time. Roughly, the method is that of identification or fusion of image. And again, I can explain no better than by quoting. Here is a passage from one of the Malatesta Cantos (XI):

Damn pity he didn't
        (*i.e.* get the knife into him)
Little fat squab 'Formosus'
But the conclave wouldn't have it
        and they called him Paolo Secondo.

And he left three horses at one gate
        And three horses at the other,
And Fatty received him
    with a guard of seven cardinals 'whom he could trust.'
And the castelan of Montefiore wrote down
'You'd better keep him out of the district
'When he got back here from Sparta, the people
'Lit fires, and turned out yelling: "PANDOLFO!"'

In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it.

And one day he said, Henry, you can have it,
On condition, you can have it: for four months
You'll stand any reasonable joke that I play on you,

And you can joke back
provided you don't get too ornry.
And they put it all down in writing:
For a green cloak with silver brocade
Actum in Castro Sigismondo,[9] *presente Roberto de Valturibus*
. . . sponte et ex certa scientia . . . to Enricho de Aquabello.

Or this, from Canto XXIII:[10]

With the sun in a golden cup
and going toward the low fords of ocean
"Αλιος δ' ὑπεριονίδας δέπας ἐσκατέβαινε χρύσεον
"Οφρα δι' ὠκεανοῖο περάσας
ima vada noctis obscurae
Seeking doubtless the sex in bread-moulds.
ἄλιος, ἄλιος, ἄλιος = μάταιος
("Derivation uncertain." The idiot
Odysseus furrowed the sand.)

Precisely, the selv' oscura,
And in the morning, in the Phrygian head-sack
Barefooted, dumping sand from their boat
'Yperionides!

In both of these passages, more obviously in the first than the second, there is a fusion of more than one image-tone (it is a matter of three vocabularies in the first, of three languages and a couple of jargons in the second); I might almost say that here is a collision of more than one plane of writing. What is effected is substantially an identification of image. The Malatesta episode is taken out of its time-place and located in our own; and, at the same time, our own time-place is translated to that of Malatesta. What has really happened, of course, is a destruction of any time-place whatsoever. It is an arrest of time in a continual present, a suspension — notes and images

---

[9] Qy: read *Sigismondi?*

[10] I have tried to restore Mr Pound's Greek, which has obviously suffered at the printer's hands: *e.g.*, *"Οψρα* for *"Οφρα*; *γ̊περιονίδας*; *"λιος* for *ἄλιος* [?]. I can't find the source, and am not sure that the passage is right even yet.

> as facets of air,
> and the mind there, before them, moving,
> so that the notes needed not move.[11]

This is managed here by a fusion of the associations and technics of tones: the ancient and the contemporary. Sometimes it is effected simply by transitionless juxtaposition: so, Canto I ends with Odysseus, and passes with no more than a 'So that': to the *Sordello* of Robert Browning; and the Proteus at the end of Canto II is connected by only an 'And . . .' with the modern Venice of Canto III, which immediately, with no transitional phrase at all, takes up the story of Myo Cid before Burgos. At other times it is brought about not by fusion or juxtaposition, but by a complicated interweaving of the strands of fact and association (*cf.* Cantos XIV and XV). Whatever the method, the identification is perfected by Mr Pound's most familiar device: the making himself the agonist of his characters, their mask ('persona'), and, at the same time, the establishment of his characters as *personæ* of himself. He is not only the pilgrim through his cosmos: he is the Vergil pointing out the notable personages to Dante, and, more, he is each one of the notable personages. This, then, is, as I see it, the design and the construction of *XXX Cantos*.

The poem is successful in theory; it is, without any doubt, the most ambitious poetic conception of our day; and it is so nearly successful in execution that fault-finding seems invidious. At the same time, there are unmistakable lapses; and it is curious to observe that these lapses occur inevitably whenever the poet, whether through preoccupation with a detail of fact, or by allowing the intensity of his emotion to degenerate into a personal violence, drops the *persona*, steps away, as it were, from the frieze-stage, and begins to comment upon the actors directly, as Ezra Pound, to the audience. I can account in no other way for the failure of Cantos XIV and XV. These Cantos are the *Inferno* of the poem, and are conceived in the manner of the traditional scatological invective.

---

[11] Canto XXV.

But for all their vigour (and they are certainly startling!) they carry very little conviction. They do not *assert:* they rant, they snarl. One is always conscious of Mr Pound in these Cantos, — of Mr Pound *as* Mr Pound, with scores to pay off, with injuries to redress. The invective is personalized. Worse, the intention to shock and disgust is childishly apparent. Dante, too, could put his enemies in Hell; Dante could shock and disgust; but Dante's method, even when the conception is entirely personal, is always a universalization, unlimited by Dante himself, un-selfconscious.

Preoccupation with a detail for the detail's sake accounts for a more serious, because more fundamental, failure. An example of this tendency may be noticed in the macaronic passage from the beginning of Canto XXIII, which I have quoted. Here Mr Pound is having a perfectly grand time playing with the various meanings of ἄλιος; apparently these maltreated words have overtones of emotional association for him. But he has failed to convey these associations to the reader. For the moment he is indulging pure pedantry — and not very accurate pedantry, at that. Again, he has ceased to assert; he has substituted something unconvincingly dead for something convincingly alive. And I would suggest that this tendency is fundamental. Mr Pound's attitude *is* the pedantic, unreal attitude. Throughout the poem he has substituted book-living for actual life. In spite of his realization of what poetry must do, — a realization articulate for ever in the beautiful Kung episode, — he has failed to make his poetry meet the test of its own formulation: he has failed to assert life because he has chosen only a ghost-life, a life at second hand, to assert.

I have called this poem the greatest *conception* of our day. Aside from what seems to me a fundamental error in attitude, it is a memorable work. Technically it is nearly faultless; as a craftsman Mr Pound is so far in advance of all the rest of us that his book should be universally read, if only as a manual of poetic technic. But it is much more than splendid writing. It is a gallant proud attempt to assert the positive value of experience. It is very nearly the great music, 'fit for the Odes.'

DUDLEY FITTS

IRONY AND HUMILITY

Ash Wednesday. *By T. S. Eliot. New York: The Fountain Press.* 28 *pages.* $5.

Every age, as it sees itself, is the peculiarly distracted one: its chroniclers notoriously make too much of the variety before their own eyes. We are now inclined to see the variety of the past as mere turbulence within a fixed unity, and our own surface standardization as the sign of a profound disunity of impulse. We have discovered that the chief ideas that men lived by from about the twelfth to the eighteenth century were absolute and unquestionable, and that the social turmoil of European history was simply shortsighted disagreement as to the best ways of making these deep assumptions socially good. The temper of literary criticism in the past appears to bear out this belief. Although writers were judged morally, no critic expected the poet to give him a morality. The standard of judgment was largely unconscious; a poem was a piece of free and disinterested enjoyment for minds mature enough — that is, convinced enough of a satisfactory destiny — not to demand of every scribbler a way of life. Dante invented no formula for society to run itself by; he only used a ready-made one. Turn to the American Humanists, and you will find that literature is the reflection of a secular order that must be controlled. But Mr. John Dos Passos has been far-sighted enough to detect the chief aim of modern criticism of nearly every school. This is: to give up the European and "belle-lettristic" dabbling with the arts, and all that that involves, and to study the American environment with a view to making a better adaptation to it.

To discuss the merits of such a critical outlook lies outside my argument. It would be equally pointless to attempt an appraisal of any of its more common guides to salvation, including the uncommon one of the Thirty-nine Articles, which have been subscribed to by Mr. T. S. Eliot, whose six poems published under the title "Ash Wednesday" are the occasion of this review. For it is my thesis that, in a discussion of Mr. Eliot's poetry, his doctrine has little to command interest in itself. Yet it appears that the poetry, notwithstanding the amount of space it gets in the critical journals, receives less discussion each year. The moral and religious attitude behind it has been related to the Thirty-nine Articles, to an intellectual position that Eliot has defended in prose. The poetry and the prose are taken together as evidence that the author has made a rather inefficient adaptation to the modern environment; or at least he doesn't say anything very helpful to the American critics in their struggles to adapt themselves. It is an astonishing fact that, in an atmosphere of "aesthetics," there is less discussion of poetry in a typical modern essay on that fine art than there is in Johnson's essay on Denham. Johnson's judgment is frankly moralistic, but he seldom capitulates to a moral sentiment because it flatters his own moral sense. He requires the qualities of generality, invention, and perspicuity. He hates Milton for a regicide, but his judgment of "Paradise Lost" is the most disinterested in English criticism. Mr. Eliot's critics are a little less able each year to see the poetry for Westminster Abbey; the wood is all trees.

I do not pretend to judge how far our social and philosophical needs justify this prejudice, which may be put somewhat summarily as follows: all forms of human action, economics, politics, even poetry, and certainly industry, are legitimate modes of salvation, but the more historical religious mode is illegitimate. It is sufficient here to point out that the man who expects to find salvation in the latest lyric or a well-managed factory will not only not find it there; he is not likely to find it anywhere else. If a young mind is incapable of moral philosophy, a mind without moral philosophy is incapable of understanding poetry. For poetry, of all the arts, demands a serenity of view and a settled temper of the mind, and most of all the power to detach one's own needs from the experience set forth in the poem. A moral sense so organized sets limits to the human enterprise, and is content to observe them. But if the reader lack this sense, the poem will be only a body of abstractions either useful or irrelevant to that body of abstractions already forming, but of uncertain direction, in the reader's mind. This reader will see the poem chiefly as biography, and he will proceed to deduce from it a history of the poet's case, to which he will attach himself if his own case resembles it; if it doesn't, he will reject it. Either way, the quality of the poem is ignored. But I will return to this in a moment.

The reasoning that is being brought to bear upon Mr. Eliot's recent verse is as follows: Anglo-Catholicism would not at all satisfy me; therefore, his poetry declines under its influence. Moreover, the poetry is not contemporaneous; it doesn't solve any labor problems; it is special, personal, and it can do us no good. Now the poetry *is* special and personal in quality, which is one of its merits, but what the critics are really saying is this — that his case-history is not special at all, that it is a general form of possible conduct that will not do for them. To accept the poetry seems to amount to accepting an invitation to join the Anglican Church. For the assumption is that the poetry and the religious position are identical. If this were so, why should not the excellence of the poetry induce them to join the Church, in the hope of writing as well, since the irrelevance of the Church to their own needs makes them reject the poetry? The answer is, of course, that both parts of this fallacy are common. There is an aesthetic Catholicism, and there is a Communist-economic rejection of art because it is involved with the tabooed mode of salvation.

The belief is that Mr. Eliot's poetry is a simple record of the relation of his personality to an environment, and it witnesses the powerful modern desire to judge an art scientifically, practically, industrially; according to how it works. The poetry is viewed as a pragmatic result, and it has no use. Now a different heredity-environment combination would give us, of mechanical necessity, a different result, a different quantity of power to do a different and perhaps better work. Doubtless this is true. But there is something disconcerting in this simple solution to the problem when it is looked at more closely. Two vastly different records or case-histories might give us, qualitatively speaking, very similar results: Baudelaire and Eliot have in common many qualities but *no history*. Their "results" have at least the common features of irony, humility, introspection, reverence — qualities fit only for contemplation and not for judgment according to their desirability in our own conduct.

It is in this, the qualitative sense, that Eliot's poetry has been, I believe, misunderstood. In this sense, the poetry is special, personal, of no use, and highly distinguished. But it is held to be a general formula, not distinct from the general formula that Eliot subscribed to when he went into the Church.

The form of the poems in "Ash Wednesday" is lyrical and solitary, and there is almost none of the elaborate natural description and allusion which gave "The Waste Land" a partly realistic and partly symbolic character. These six poems are a brief moment of religious experience in an age that believes religion to be a kind of defeatism and puts its hope for man in finding the right secular order. The mixed realism and symbolism of "The Waste Land" issued in irony. The direct and lyrical method of the new poems creates the simpler aesthetic quality of humility. The latter quality comes directly out of the former, and there is a nice continuity in Mr. Eliot's work.

In "The Waste Land" the prestige of our secular faith gave to the style its peculiar character. This faith was the hard, coherent medium through which the discredited forms of the historic religions emerged only to be stifled; the poem is at once their vindication and defeat. They are defeated in fact, as a politician may be defeated by the popular vote, but their vindication consists in the withering irony that their subordinate position casts upon the modern world.

The typical scene is the seduction of the typist by the clerk, in "The Fire Sermon." Perhaps Mr. J. W. Krutch has not discussed this scene, but a whole generation of critics have, and from a viewpoint that Mr. Krutch has recently made popular: the seduction betrays the romantic disillusion of the poet. The mechanical, brutal scene shows what love really is — that is to say, what it is scientifically, since science is Truth; it is only an act of practical necessity, for procreation. The telling of the story by the Greek seer, who is chosen from a past of illusion and ignorance, permits the scene to become a *satire on the foolish values of the past.* The values of the past were absurd and false; the scientific Truth is both true and bitter. This is the familiar romantic dilemma, and the critics have read it into the scene from their own romantic despair.

There is none in the scene itself. The critics, who being in the state of mind I have described are necessarily blind to an effect of irony, have mistaken the symbols of an ironic contrast for the terms of a philosophic dilemma. Mr. Eliot knows too much about classical irony to be overwhelmed by a doctrine in literary biology. For the seduction scene shows, not what man is, but what *for a moment* he thinks he is; in other words, the clerk stands for the secularization of the humane and qualitative values in the modern world. And the meaning of the contrast between Tiresias and the clerk is not disillusion, but irony. The scene is a masterpiece; perhaps the most profound vision that we have of modern man.

The importance of this scene as a key to the intention of "Ash Wednesday" lies in the moral identity of humility and irony and in an important difference between them artistically. Humility is subjective, a quality of the moral character, an habitual attitude. Irony is the particular and objective instance of humility — that is, it is an event or situation which induces humility in the mind of a spectator; it is that arrangement of experience, either premeditated by art or accidentally appearing in the affairs of men, which permits to the spectator an insight superior to that of the actor, and shows him that the practical formula, the special ambition, of the actor is bound to fail. Humility is thus the self-respect proceeding from a sense of the folly of men in their desire to dominate a natural force or situation. The seduction scene is the picture of the modern and dominating man. The cleverness and the pride of conquest of the "small house agent's clerk" are the badge of science, bumptious practicality, overweening secular faith. The very success of his conquest witnesses its aimless character; it succeeds as a wheel succeeds in turning; he can only do it over again.

His own failure to understand his position is irony, and the poet's insight into it is humility. This is essentially the poetic attitude, an attitude that Mr. Eliot has been approaching with increasing purity. It is not that his recent verse is better or more exciting than that of the period ending with "The Waste Land." Actually it is less spectacular and less complex in subject-matter; for Eliot less frequently objectifies his leading emotion, humility, into irony. His form is simple, expressive, homogeneous, and direct, and without the usual elements of violent contrast.

There is a single ironic passage in "Ash Wednesday," and significantly enough it is the first stanza of the first poem. This passage presents objectively the poet *as he thinks himself for the moment to be*. It establishes that humility towards his own merit which sets the whole mood of the poems that follow. And the irony has been overlooked by the critics because they take the stanza as a literal exposition of the latest phase of the Eliot "case-history" — at a time when, in the words of Mr. Edmund Wilson, "his psychological plight seems most depressing." Thus, here is the pose of a Titan too young to be weary of strife, but weary of it nevertheless:

> Because I do not hope to turn again
> Because I do not hope
> Because I do not hope to turn
> Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope
> I no longer strive to strive towards such things
> (Why should the aged eagle stretch its wings?)
> Why should I mourn
> The vanished power of the usual reign?

If the six poems are taken together as the focus of a specific religious emotion, the opening stanza, instead of being a naïve personal "confession," becomes only a modest but highly effective technical performance. This stanza has two features that are necessary to the development of the unique imagery which distinguishes the religious emotion of "Ash Wednesday" from any other religious poetry of our time and which, in fact, probably makes it the only valid religious poetry we have. The first feature is the regular yet halting rhythm, the smooth uncertainty of movement which may either proceed to greater regularity or fall away into improvisation. The second feature is the imagery itself. It is trite; it echoes two familiar passages from English poetry. But the quality to be observed is this: it is secular imagery. It sets forth a special ironic emotion, but this emotion is not identified with any specific experience. The imagery is thus perfectly suited to the character of the rhythm. The stanza is a device for getting the poem under way, starting from a known and general emotion, in a monotonous rhythm, for a direction which to the reader is unknown. The ease, the absence of surprise, with which Mr. Eliot brings out the subject to be "discussed" is admirable. After some further and ironic deprecation of his worldly powers, he goes on:

> And pray to God to have mercy upon us
> And pray that I may forget
> These matters that with myself I too much discuss
> Too much explain

We are being told, of course, that there is to be some kind of discourse on God, or a meditation; yet the emotion is still general. The imagery is even flatter than before; it is imagery at all only in that special context; for it is the diction of prose. And yet, subtly and imperceptibly, the rhythm has changed; it is irregular and labored. We are being prepared for a new and sudden effect, and it comes in the first lines of the second poem:

> Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree
> In the cool of the day, having fed to satiety
> On my legs my heart my liver and that which had been contained
> In the hollow round of my skull. And God said
> Shall these bones live? shall these
> Bones live?

From here on, in all the poems, there is constant and sudden change of rhythm, and there is a corresponding alternation of two kinds of imagery — the visual and tactile imagery common to all poetry and without significance in itself for any kind of experience, and the traditional religious symbols. The two orders are inextricably fused.

It is evident that Mr. Eliot has hit upon the only method now available of using the conventional religious image in poetry. He has reduced it to metaphor, to the plane of sensation. And corresponding to this process, there are images of his own invention which he almost pushes over the boundary of sensation into abstractions, where they have the appearance of conventional symbols. The passage I have quoted above is an example of this: for the "Lady" may be a nun, or even the Virgin, or again she may be a beautiful woman; but she is presented, through the serious tone of the invocation, with all the solemnity of a religious figure. The fifth poem exhibits the reverse of the process; it begins with a series of plays on the Logos, which is the most rarefied of all the Christian abstractions, and succeeds in creating an *illusion of sensation* by means of a broken and distracted rhythm:

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent
If the unheard, unspoken
Word is unspoken, unheard;
Still is the unspoken word, the word unheard,
The word without a word, the Word within
The world and for the world. . . .

ALLEN TATE

THE PSYCHE OF A PHILOSOPHER

The Realm of Matter. Book Second of Realms of Being. *By George Santayana. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.* 209 *pages.* $3.50.

The psyche of a philosopher, the habit, in a man's mind, of infinite fidelity to the substance of things as they are reflected or expressed in spirit, is perhaps the rarest of all psyches; it does not populate the technical expert who most often passes by that name, nor yet the thinker of grave thoughts. To one not a philosopher, and so likely to ask too much of it rather than too little, what goes today by the name of professional philosophy is barren reading: it is not fertile in wisdom: it seems as far from the hard predicaments of the senses which gave it birth as mathematical physics from the sensible aspects of the land. So readers run to H. G. Wells, the Very Reverend Dean of St. Paul's, or the lesser Bertrand Russell. There is more philosophy, unconscious as it is, in the rejection of philosophy, even by the ignorance of instinct, than in the resort to these gentlemen. But the extreme flight is unnecessary; it is flight from a bogey. There are the older classics of philosophy, and there is Santayana who works in their tradition; that tradition by means of which a man who has it may live *en philosophe.*

En Philosophe! a French phrase: we think of La Bruyère, of La Rochefoucauld; and if we think of Plato and his Socrates, and Aristotle, and Democritus, and in the background Lucretius and Spinoza, all at the same time, we shall have made a good beginning for an image of Santayana. — Unfortunately we are not brought up to think of these men, unless, contrary to present supposition, we are philosophers; we are content to use their names only, conventional tropes in the facile verse of education. The idea of natural philosophy is foreign to us, like the use of our senses. We consider philosophy, as most of us consider all the kinds of knowledge, as a structure sufficient in itself, either without relation to the world we live in or equal to it. Natural philosophy is different;

it is morals primarily and judges the human predicament, but in so doing is bound to discover as clearly as possible the conditions on earth of that predicament. Its method is wisdom; its instruments insight and intuition, shrewdness and common sense; and its end is a kind of poetry. It is all that we are conscious of in its finest form. It is spirit. Santayana is a moral philosopher.

Realms of Being, of which this is the third volume, is a work of natural or moral philosophy; but the author's morals are not founded in heaven nor lost in any metaphysic. His creation, his Eden, is matter and man's experience of it. He interprets not the will of man but the will of matter. "The dominance of matter in every existing being, even when that being is spiritual, is the great axiom of materialism, to which this whole book is only a corollary. . . . Matter is no model devised by the human imagination, like Egyptian atoms of the laws of physics, but is a primeval plastic substance of unknown potentiality, perpetually taking on new forms; the gist of materialism being that these forms are all passive and precarious, while the plastic stress of matter is alone creative and, as far as we can surmise, indestructible."

Either you can swallow this, and understand it, or, because of some radical vice in your senses, some eccentric antipathy in your heart, you cannot swallow it. If you cannot swallow it the whole of Santayana's doctrine is lost to you. He will seem, as a philosopher, as thin, as frivolous, as La Rochefoucauld; and as useful in conversation. You will rejoice or take offence in his periphery. If you rejoice you will do so for poor reasons, for you will have no notion what his brilliance illuminates. If you are offended you will do better, though your personal loss will be even greater; for you will have been at least logical and have rejected the sauce with the meat which it livened. It is a matter of the chemistry of digestion. Some live on sweets, some on substitutes.

Santayana is never brilliant for nothing, at least not nowadays; his brilliance is never a waste. He thinks that way; with his senses, his imagination, in the midst of the human predicament. As life is a trope, which is to say a habit, of matter, so thought is a trope of some life. Some of his critics have been lost in the tropes without having observed the objects of the tropes. William James used to complain of his then colleague, Santayana, that his philosophy had about it an air of rotten ripeness. He also complained voluminously of his brother Henry's novels that they never got anywhere. It is the same complaint. William James' tastes like his philosophy were personal; they depended on his personality, like those of any romantic and most scientists. In this respect he resembles neither his brother nor Santayana, whose styles alone are personal. The trouble was that William James wanted philosophy to become action, novels to become action: he himself brought the useful word pragmatism to the disreputable ruin of commonplace, and the consequence of his life was that for many morals became an interminable sideshow for psychology. Santayana, on the other hand, wanted philosophy to give a form to knowledge, and reflect action in the spirit, just as Henry James' great passion was that his characters might waken to what life was. Both men wished to bring life to the verge of spirit, but without treason to that life.

With such a conception of the uses of the mind, with such a discipline of loyalty to the substance of things, whatever that substance was, philosophy for Santayana, and the art of the novel for Henry James, necessarily never lost contact with the life surveyed. Neither man was ever deceived by the easy ruse of simplicity or by the artificial thunder of law. Neither nature nor the life of spirit it occasionally fosters in man is bound to take a simple, sympathetic form to man's understanding; merely, man seizes on what is sympathetic and so easily seized and calls it simple: actually, it is only his understanding which is so. Nature, finally, is indecipherable except verbally; and spirit, initially, is pure light and play, nature's self-illumination. Nature and spirit may be known by experience, in feeling; and the knowledge may be organized and discussed in terms of that residue of experience, common sense; and the knowledge of that knowledge, so to speak, may be expressed in poetry. The point is that every discussion and every expression must, to be profitable in truth and relevancy, be brought back to the experience of the senses. We do this successfully in the pristine poetry of everyday action — chiefly because the psyche or habit within us is stronger than all our errors and we cannot help ourselves. We fail miserably, as a rule, whenever the subject of discussion or expression is at all what is loosely called abstract — that is, separate from the immediate prospect of the senses.

We fail because our poetry is bad; the poem of our thoughts, the drama of decision, reflects only a sympathetic, simple convention. Hardly a rudimentary feeling, if it deals with obscure or unusual matter, but is corrected by subsequent history; and that correction is commonly the substitution of a more complex, less sympathetic convention for that which was instinctively undertaken. In other words, we make the matter more concrete; we bring our senses to terms with the matter, and modify our feelings, and so our poetry, accordingly.

This is the labour of Santayana; it should be the labour of any philosopher — varying only in degree with the field chosen. The philosopher should be a good poet, with his eye on the object, whatever his particular object may be. Most philosophers in recent centuries have accidentally limited themselves, in the enthusiasm of logical discovery, to the field of method — to a technique of knowledge either idealistic or, in late generations, scientific. We have been left for our wisdom to the poets.

It is a good judgment upon a philosophy to see what sort of poetry it helps produce. There is Shelley, for a mean example, and so far as the "philosophy" in his verse is concerned, Shelley is surely Arnold's angel in a void. Coleridge is a worse example in that as a poet he was wrecked entirely upon the rocks of transcendental idealism, so that his mind worked only fitfully. Much that is impossibly barbarous in Whitman is certainly due to the influence of Professor Babbitt's demon the "philosophy" of Rousseau.

As it happens, Santayana has himself examined Shelley and Whitman; and he has also, in a single volume, written of the philosophy at the heart of Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe, and has shown with great clarity how the comparative failure of Dante and Goethe is due to the ill effects of incomplete philosophies which were themselves bad poetry — poetry not in accord with the senses that fed it, but which distorted or concentrated upon some single insight, some profound purview, into human life, and allocated to it passions and feelings over which it could assert no natural mastery. The life of reason was made artificially to exist divorced from the life of reality.

Santayana's philosophy is a true marriage of the two; the sacrament is of the spirit; the mystery it expresses, matter. The five volumes of *The Life of Reason* made a survey of the uses to which the European mind has been put in common sense, society, religion, art, and science. The work was not a system but an informative meditation, a dramatic poem. *Realms of Being*, which with its prefatory *Scepticism and Animal Faith* will presumably take five volumes, is a system of philosophy dealing with the nature, conditions, uses, and meaning of the mind itself and its knowledge, as these are expressed in the realms of essence, matter, truth, and spirit. There is nothing peculiar to the system but the beauty and verve with which it is written; it contains nothing foreign to common sense except that it persistently illuminates it; it exhibits no difficulties to the meditative reader other than the difficulties inherent in matter and spirit themselves — ultimate mystery and ultimate spontaneity. It is possible, in reading it, to consider one's self at the same time thinking *en philosophe* and feeling as a poet; a combination rare, but absolutely essential, to natural philosophy.

Santayana is possessed, besides his native animal psyche, by the psyche of a philosopher. "The psyche is the specific form of physical life, present and potential, asserting itself in any plant or animal. . . . The psyche is so much of us, and of our works, as is our own doing. . . . All the themes and passions of spirit, however spiritual or immaterial in themselves, celebrate the vicissitudes of a natural psyche, like a pure poet celebrating the adventures of lovers and kings."

Santayana is such a pure poet, and his poetry judges his philosophy. Neither the poetry nor the philosophy will necessarily suit anyone else on earth; but the two suit him perfectly.

R. P. Blackmur

MAJOR FICTION

FLOWERING JUDAS. *By Katherine Anne Porter. Harcourt, Brace and Co. Primavera Editions. Edition limited to six hundred copies.* $2.50.

Miss Porter's book contains six stories, *María Concepción*, *Magic*, *Rope*, *He*, *The Jilting of Granny Weatherall*, and *Flowering Judas*, arranged in this order, which is the order of composition. Of these six tales, three deal with themes that are sharply limited. *Magic*, for example, tells of a prostitute who leaves a brothel because of brutal treatment from the proprietress and returns ostensibly as the result of a charm worked upon her in her absence, actually, one suspects, because of her physical exhaustion. What one has, however, is a static sketch of the brothel, the beating, the departure, the charm, the return. It is a good sketch, but it is nothing more. *Rope*, which is composed almost entirely in dialogue presented as indirect discourse, gives the rise and fall of a quarrel between a husband and wife, a quarrel that appears to be wholly the result of nervous fatigue. The timing is skillful; the details are admirable; but the quarrel remains a quarrel, presented in an almost crystalline fashion, indeed, but with no very wide implications. The next story, *He*, deals with a half-wit boy in a family benumbed by his presence; it is moving, but it is primarily a study in disease; one feels of this story as of the two preceding that it was intended to be an object of curiosity, a brilliantly executed fictive knick-knack, rather than a general symbol of experience.

Despite this objection, the three stories are written with such skill that they would suffice to give Miss Porter a very respectable place among contemporary fictionists; but they have probably been surpassed in some measure by one or two writers of lesser talents, notably by Mr. Morley Callaghan, who, at his best (*Last Spring They Came Over*, *A Cocky Young Man*, *A Girl with Ambition*), displays an irony in handling subjects roughly comparable to those of *Rope* and of *He* that is at once infinitely discreet and cruelly devastating. Mr. Callaghan's irony exists in what one might call a pure state and can be applied to his limited subjects with extreme precision; Miss Porter's irony is inseparable from a very complex attitude, an attitude that is usually intensely tragic (in the most respectable sense of the word), that always, at any rate, involves much more than irony, and that requires a subject capable of carrying a considerable weight of feeling — when her irony is applied to such a subject as that of *Rope*, one feels, slightly, at least, that the irony is dragging a little too much else with it; and that the actual theme of the story is not quite an adequate embodiment of the tension one feels in the atmosphere. There is neither the ironic detachment of Mr. Callaghan nor the complete absorption of the author in the symbol that occurs in Miss Porter's more ambitious tales.

María Concepción, the earliest story included, is much richer than the three which follow it. It is the story of a Mexican girl who kills a rival for her husband's love. Such a story told by one of the contemporary objectivists, of whom Mr. Hemmingway is the most popular and Mr. Callaghan the most distinguished representative, would probably have been given as nearly as possible from the point of view of the peasants themselves, perhaps in terms of their bare words and actions. Mr. Callaghan does this in *Soldier Harmon*, the story of a Sadistic pugilist. The norm toward which this sort of thing tends, I suppose, is something like Little Black Sambo or the Sunbonnet Babies. Miss Porter follows the older tradition of treating her characters as important symbols, that is, from the point of view of the intelligent human; the story actually deals with her own feelings about the feelings of her people. This does not mean that she appears on the stage in person; her relationship to the story is felt in the quality of the perception. She has such precedent as the works of Hardy and Graham, to mention no others. Mr. Callaghan's only contribution, in his own name, to such stories, and it is a contribution he has made rather seldom, is, as I have said, his chemically pure irony.

María Concepción is technically straight narrative, marred a little by over-decoration. The last two stories in the book, *The Jilting of Granny Weatherall*, and *Flowering Judas*, employ a convention that makes for greater concentration, the convention of revery alternating with perceptions of the present. It is, however, a *convention*, rigidly controlled by the author, with no surrender on her part to a psychological flux, no weakening of her powers of selection and arrangement. The perceptions of the present, including a good deal of conversation, give the setting and the actual narrative progression that takes place between the first sentence and the last. The revery provides another dimension, the background and antecedent history. In this manner *The Jilting of Granny Weatherall* presents completely in some twenty-two pages the rich and tragic career of an old woman, along with a portrait of her household as they are gathered about her deathbed. There is no excess of simplification, no summary, no omission. The story is as complete and powerful as a fine poetic drama. *Flowering Judas*, with which most of the readers of this review will be familiar, covers as much ground, quite as successfully, though the actual length of time involved is considerably less. *Theft*, a story unfortunately omitted from this volume, but available in Mr. O'Brien's collection for 1930, raises to intense seriousness a device employed in *Rope*, that of using a simple occurrence as the ineluctable allegory of things much greater than itself, and yet of making that occurrence so real in itself that the obviousness of the allegory, far from being a weakness, is a source of tremendous strength. I can think offhand of no one who has succeeded in doing anything quite like it. *Theft*, again, employs a straight narrative method, but is much swifter and much more intense than *María Concepción*. *Theft* and the last two stories in the book seem to me to be major fiction. I can think of no living American who has written short stories at once so fine in detail, so powerful as units, and so mature and intelligent in outlook, except W. C. Williams; and one can make that exception for but one, I believe, of his compositions, *The Destruction of Tenochtitlan*. Even the Declamations of Mr. Kenneth Burke, if they are to be regarded as fiction, fall short of Miss Porter in firmness of detail and in organic progression.

YVOR WINTERS

SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY

MY THIRTY YEARS' WAR: An Autobiography. *By Margaret Anderson. New York, Covici, Friede.* 1930. $3.00.

THE STRANGE DEATH OF PRESIDENT HARDING. *From the Diaries of Gaston B. Means, as told to May Dixon Thacker. New York, Guild Publishing Corporation.* 1930. $3.50.

HOW TO COMMIT A MURDER. *By Danny Ahearn. New York, Ives Washburn.* 1930. $2.50.

MEN, MARRIAGE AND ME. *By Peggy Hopkins Joyce. New York, The Macaulay Company.* 1930. $2.50.

VAGABOND DREAMS COME TRUE. *By Rudy Vallée. New York, E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc.* 1930. $2.50.

The professional qualities of these books and their authors present something of a problem to a reviewer who has lacked the advantages of their *milieu*, for any one who has not sat in at the poisoning of a President or made a practice of murder, who has yet to be married, not once, but over and again, who could not croon, or play the saxophone, or edit the *Little Review* even if he were to try, must be careful not to be cocksure on these subjects. Yet detachment discovers in all these books a common quality that their titles and authors might never suggest: all five of them are samples of the society of a country still rich enough to talk the nonsense of equality and liberty, still smug with the satisfaction of quick success, and still more addicted to the narcotic habit of reading to kill time. In a land where one kind of success is apparently just as good as any other — where flying the Atlantic is as fine a thing as fighting ignorance, and selfishness, and cruelty — these authors have gambled for admiration with the lazy and pretentious, who prevail by sheer weight and numbers. Any knot of psychologists would label these ladies and gentlemen exhibitionists, but the final cause of these books (apart from the laudable desire to serve humanity by instruction) was probably hard cash.

Three of these books, readers ought to be warned, were written by "ghosts," two of these familiar spirits remaining anonymous; with each volume comes at least one photograph of the author (Miss or Mrs. Joyce being confined to the jacket); in two of the narratives the customary use of quotation marks is dispensed with, and nowhere are the necessities of dates and circumstances any too keenly respected. The reviewer has listed the works, at the head, in the order of their actual importance.

Vagabond Dreams Come True is an autobiographical glorification of two great triumphs of modern ingenuity, the radio and the saxophone; its author, born in Maine, graduated at Yale, started in Boston, and finished off in New York about 1928, needs no introduction — as local heroes used to say of obscure politicians. Mr. Vallée assures his readers in a foreword that he has made this book himself in spite of a nineteen-hour daily schedule; he dedicates it to eight mothers, inserts Miss Diven's poem on himself as the scourge of husbands, and tacks on at the end a facsimile of the mayor of Westbrook's proclamation for a holiday in his honor. "People tell me," writes Mr. Vallée, "that success is fragile, and that the slightest indiscreet action on my part would mean the end" — reflecting perhaps on the painful fall of Fatty Arbuckle some years since — but goes on comfortably to conclude that as long as the band delivers the goods, "the end" will never come.

Parents doubtful as to what to do with their children, as well as students of education, ought to read the chapter "Did College Help Me?" a most unusual question for a graduate of Yale. Mr. Vallée's skill at applying the benefits of a "course that gave me a little of everything" to the practical problems of life (his course in psychology taught him when and where to play what music) will delight the unregenerate and injudicious. Opposite a photograph of Mr. Vallée in the Yale Bowl (1926) stands this paragraph:

> "Although for my own part the native talents that came to me through inheritance are greatly responsible for my achievements, I feel that my college training has helped me in many ways that I know of and many more that I am not directly aware of. Certainly a college training has never hurt an individual."

If Mr. Vallée reads something like a jazzed-up edition of the works of Calvin Coolidge, Peggy Hopkins Joyce is a sober version of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. The ghost in question, quarrelling with Miss Joyce, it is said, over the printed values placed on jewels, arranged *Men, Marriage and Me* in the form of a diary, interrupting the sequence now and then with italicized synopses of courtships and excursions. At the beginning of Chapter 30 readers are supposed to transfer themselves (with the aid of the "editor") from the fiction of the unconscious diary to the conscious confessions; Peggy, we are told, is now writing for publication. Incidentally, this chapter, "Aladdin Offers Me His Heart," a boastful record of gold-digging, contains the most amusing pages in the whole book (236–237), Miss Joyce's "definition of the perfect husband" — "anything but poor and fat" — in ten paragraphs. From the midst of maudlin sentiment about farms, mothers, and nunneries, actors' quarrels, and diamond tiaras and casual entries such as "*Tuesday*. A boy named Stewart, really very nice, sent me some flowers in a pot of earth called tulips" (94), these ten rules for what a man should be ("It is very tiring to have to look at a husband early in the morning") are the best of the wit and wisdom of Peggy.

Any one eager to seek happiness through liberty and "beat the rap" meanwhile, will have to do more than read Danny Ahearn. *How to Commit a Murder* contains no information that careful readers of newspapers could not dig out of New York reporting or reform investigations of vice. Lack of the specific impairs the value of this kind of book: "Before he signed the contract for his book Ahearn stipulated that he was to mention no names and to give away no secrets regarding individuals in or out of his own society" (17). Any reader will understand the very good reasons for the author's reticences, but just there arises the difficulty of making the confessions of criminals sound convincing. Daniel Defoe could have made this book over a week-end, cluttering it with minute details picked up out of newspapers, slipping characters into the places of abstractions, doing as well with the verisimilitude of his dialogue as this East Side Daniel did, dictating in the presence of "two witnesses." Of the final product the editor, "J. S. C.," writes somewhat discouragingly: "Ahearn shows us clearly, although entirely unconsciously, the futility of trying to reform anyone who, with a background such as his, has successfully engaged in crime before his first conviction." The scene of this story is the criminal's paradise of big cities; Chinamen, stool-pigeons, and women are the hero's pet aversions, and a "criminal Credo" prefaces a career which extends all the way from the trifling misdemeanor of robbing a jewelry store to the rather more serious business of killing a "bull-dozer." Just how Mr. Ahearn can square this book (to which he personally devoted the evenings of three weeks) with his motto of keeping his bowels open and his mouth shut, is a question. Perhaps the quiet retirement of a professional gambler permits of freedom of speech — at any rate, the story concludes "From now on I intend to gamble. I'll gamble until the day I die. (And then, as if conversion had overcome him:) From now on my motto is: Plenty of women, plenty of cabarets, and plenty of gambling, with booze on the side." If manners of moralists encourage vice, certainly pastimes of criminals prompt thoughts of refuge in virtue — or the look of it.

Of the three men, feeble, fatuous, and futile who have lived in the White House since Andrew Mellon assumed the power of the presidency on March 5, 1921, certainly Warren Gamaliel Harding, thus far, has supplied the most excitement. *The Strange Death of President Harding* is the second book based on the late President's private life, and the axis of the plot of this book is the author of the first: Nan Britton. Because this later effort has enjoyed a certain success, a dispassionate examination of the credentials of the author and his output, is in order. From no point of view is either of these satisfactory. Gaston B. Means has been a hired spy since boyhood (63–64); after three years in the Federal penitentiary at Atlanta he emerged in July, 1928, determined to use his "sixteen trunks and nine packing cases filled with documents" for the making of a story that should "show up" the whole crowd that had double-crossed him when he "took the rap" in 1925, expecting to be let off with a fine — an odd proceeding, by the way, for a man who boasts that he has never trusted any one (108). Not only is the "author's" character smirched with suspicions, but the specimen recommendations as to that character are from shady or obscure people like Mabel Walker Willebrandt, William J. Burns (who himself escaped jail in the Sinclair Trial with the skin of his teeth) and Senator George H.

Moses of New Hampshire. Moreover, the so-called "documents" printed in the Appendix (283–312) are often non-committal and even inaccurate. Mr. Means, in the telling of his story, occasionally employs the dubious method of fictitious names and circumstances, and last, but by no means least, the great majority of his statements could be contradicted only by persons now dead. The professional detective's insistence on the strategic importance of his life and deeds suggests a touch of paranoia (168 and 188).

According to Mr. Means (now busily engaged in hunting down Bolsheviks somewhere in New York State) he was hired by Mrs. Harding (a woman of great will to power, but the victim of a star-gazing quack, "Madam X") to discover the source of Attorney-General Daugherty's secret and disastrous influence on her husband. Once having with difficulty been persuaded that Nan Britton was her rival, Mrs. Harding, her love for the man she had made turned to hate, and still obsessed with anxiety for a "second term," laid her plans for domination of the distracted President by herself, "the woman of destiny" (252–253). In San Francisco, at last, realizing that she had learned too late and all was lost, she is supposed deliberately to have poisoned Mr. Harding (in the ten-minute absence of nurses) in order that he might die with honor (260–261). A few days later, Mr. Means would have us believe, she practically confessed her act to him, saying that she dreaded impeachment within twenty-four hours although the Congress was not even in session in August, 1923, and could not have met (except by call of the President) until December (264). This book is full of such disturbing statements, which, like the dates on some of the documents (296) are scarcely calculated to reassure the skeptical reader.

Not only does Mr. Means talk cant (39) but he draws a long bow, especially in his elaborate description of the house in Sixteenth Street, Washington, and the seven million dollars he would have us believe he collected from New York bootleggers by means of a goldfish bowl in the Hotel Vanderbilt (205–207). Before he makes the whole country shudder by adding up the secret agents of the Soviets, Mr. Means should turn his talent in the direction of tales of mystery and travel. That this book should ever have received a serious hearing, is a severe commentary on public opinion — the only excuse for its success being the stout unwillingness of some people ever to believe that anything is ever simple. And certainly the honest implication is that the Hardings were not only simple but obvious, that the death of the President was the result of worry, acute indigestion, and the late chronic good luck of "The Only Party Fit to Govern."

Margaret Anderson was born in Columbus, Indiana, and got to Paris (and later provincial France) *via* the *Little Review* of Chicago and New York, 1914–1927. Her mother, against whom she began her battle for life (91), was a Christian Scientist; her father ("Dad was a poignant man") "suppressed" himself for success and ultimately died insane (62–64). This book contains the story of the author's first thirty years of her war on reality, ten years, in fact, of her determination to "escape mediocrity and conquer the world," a tall order for a "magazine-cover girl." The first things to catch the attention are the illustrations — almost two dozen photographs of various and sundry persons, some of them so remarkable as to be memorable, although a *gaillard* picture of Ernest Hemingway is ridiculous and another of Jean Cocteau repellent to the last degree. A facsimile of Joyce's galley-proof and a profile study of Gertrude Stein are the best of the lot; that of Mary Garden is decidedly the worst. The lack of an index is a curious oversight, for in any volume so crammed with personalities as this, friends ought to be able to look up references to themselves without having to read about other people. Miss Anderson dedicated her book to Georgette Leblanc ("the only human being I have known who has none of the human *bêtises*"), the second of two women who have vastly influenced her life, Jane Heap having been the first: 1916–1923.

This autobiography is a glorification of the *Little Review* and the Mason and Hamlin Piano — the thoroughly amusing concoction of a rather high-strung if naïve young lady usually laboring under the impulse to do and say the unexpected in a conceited, cocksure palaver of epigrams and sly snobberies. Pictures and opinions of people crowd these pages, the chronology of which is often vague and even the geography novel (137). Gossip and indiscretion will both enrage and gratify readers in every second sentence, and Miss Anderson's occasional concealments will only irritate her victims by showing them she knew better.

Miss Anderson is no genius, even according to her own definition of that mysterious power, one third of which, she maintains, is the art of standing in one's own light (93), but she certainly picked and chose her friends with a sharp eye to their success — indeed, the *largesse* with which she scatters names well-known through interior circles of New York and Paris, almost leads one to suspect that she at one time hunted lions. No matter now: the yokels will yearn for bohemia, the converted will feel homesick for a moment, and forget. The *Little Review* is as dead as Queen Anne. But readers interested in the "bumps" of Miss Anderson will find two excellent explanations ready to hand of both her profession (58) and her character (123). If they care to see her writing at its best, the description of Brookhaven, Long Island (184) will answer the purpose.

Nonsensical and annoying as Miss Anderson can be, for ten years she occupied a position of importance in the printing of the extremely new in prose and verse in English. Her descriptions of persons, contacts, and adventures are accurate if often unbelievable — as for instance, the astonishing Baroness Elsa von Freytag von Loringhoven (178–179; 210–211), who was once seen flying feathers from her eyebrows and her toenails. The women, perhaps, are done best: the meetings with Emma Goldman and Mary Garden are memorable. As for the men, students of megalomania would do well to examine the published letters of Ezra Pound (159–172; 216–217), then wonder if the lady and gentleman are still friends.

"It is a matter for speculation," wrote Jane Heap in the valedictory of the *Little Review* (1927), "whether anyone who has tried to get at real answers would dash into print with the results" (272). In view of Miss Anderson's conversion to the system of Mr. Orage, who insists that authors are as vulnerable as actors psychologically (268), there is a kind of pathos in the story of this book. Those times are, indeed, a Lost Renaissance — two decades of adventures and exotics, of experiments with fine arts and strange deaths. The gospel of another Renaissance was also fame, but with this difference: its rogues and charlatans, its playboys and its artists lived with a new liberty in a splendid way — spent life in a fashion that our sweet land has yet to learn.

STEWART MITCHELL

RECENT POETRY

I

The Proof. *By Yvor Winters. New York, Coward-McCann, Inc.* 1930. $1.00.

Criticism in Mr. Winters' case must concern itself with asking whether or not his creative strength is yet equal to the task he has set for it. If from the evidence of these poems one is forced to conclude that it is not, the fact remains that in defining that task and accepting its burden this poet has taken a distinguished place among his contemporaries. He believes that poetry is more than the repetition, however beautiful, of old symbols; that it is rather the formation in their presence of new attitudes secure and unmistakable in themselves; that the basis of poetry is neither metaphysics nor "emotion," but the dynamic perception of life. The sharp difficulties faced by any artist who holds this ideal are perhaps only partially clear to Winters; at any rate, his effort at surmounting them has been only partially successful.

The poems in this volume are arranged in three divisions, the first composed of free verse, the second of sonnets, and the third of essays in simple stanzaic forms. It is logical to assume a corresponding chronological order, especially in view of the recent wider tendency toward conservatism, but one must guard against any immediate inference as to the comparative value of the "later" poems. The collection had better be regarded as a record of various attempts in various forms of a single, mature sensibility to make itself felt by others, and though the relative success or failure of each attempt has something to do with the form employed, it really rests on broader and more fundamental considerations.

For our purpose the poems may be grouped decisively under two heads: first, those in which Winters is trying to create a sensuous reality, second, those in which he is trying to "express an idea." Carefully examined, every poem falls into one or the other of these elementary categories. As an example of the first there is *Bison:*

O eye of grief
O fire of hairy
earth

  gunpowder
of the beating
rock!

  You
clove the silence
stared into the sun
O bed of burning
horns

  O swarming
blood that stored black
honey in your flesh

thighed with the storm!

Much could be said concerning the derivation of this rhetoric. The theory is well known: instead of using words in their ordinary relationships one selects and places them (with due regard for the page pattern) so that their aggregate effect is that of a single, powerful experience, a poem which is in fact a new word, living and transcendent, not to be analyzed bit by bit any more profitably than "gong" can be analyzed into the letters g, o, n, g. The influence this idea is exerting on poetic method can scarcely be reckoned. Some of the most distinguished verse of our generation has been written in obedience to it, and there is in America particularly a large group engaged in developing it and in working out its critical implications. So far as Winters is one of this group it is necessary to determine the excellence of his work by the standard of such poetry as Hart Crane's. The poem quoted above, as it is a representative effort in the "dissociative" technique, reveals much of Winters' strength and some of his weakness. Were it not for the phrase "clove the silence" one would feel the poem perfectly. The vision is genuine and alive, the thing grows and has being and would be its own excuse, were it not for that single line in the middle of it, with its suggestion of false grandiloquence and aimlessness. The same thing happens in other poems where the same unity and intensity are present. Those inhibited by strict form are more liable than the others to this fault, and indeed scarcely one escapes having lines or words obviously dictated by metrical exigency. Any one whose interest in the problems of verse is more than academic will feel a familiar dissatisfaction with this first stanza of one of the better pieces, *The Empty Hills:*

The grandeur of deep afternoons,
The pomp of haze on marble hills,
Where every whitewalled villa swoons
Through violence that heat fulfills. . . .

There are perhaps two free verse poems free from these amateur recrudescences, *The Goatherds* and *November*. These are finely written. As a descriptive piece the first is superior in point of structure and restraint to any post-imagist exercises this reviewer has had the privilege of reading. The rest of Winters' free verse fails either in the manner indicated or because of a much more serious fault, namely, forced intensity, intensity for its own sake sought independent of the vision itself. The worst example of this sort of thing is *See Los Angeles First*, in reading which one's inherited taste, after having been subjugated to the larger and more violent concerns of Mr. Winters at his best, reasserts itself with sudden decision. This is not good, one discovers; it is not even artistically honest. It is regrettable that this and other poems tainted with the same meretricious quality should have been included among the genuinely fine things Winters has to offer. In the latter class is a poem, *The Fall of Leaves*,[1] the technical sufficiency of which permits comparison with the best of Hart Crane. Here, on an inner frame reminiscent of Robert Frost, the poet has wrought a texture sustained, luminous, and moving. It is more than virtuosity; it is the work of an artist; it is good to read.

Winters' metaphysical preoccupations *as metaphysical preoccupations* are constantly appearing in the poems where the idea, not the substance (there is a clear distinction) predominates. Here again it is when his imagery is most concentrated, when he is most fortunate in the suggestion of momentous overtones, that the poems are most effective. They are least effective when Winters'

[1] Printed in THE HOUND & HORN, Vol. III, No. p. 314.

ideas of discipline and firmness have coerced him to such disheartening experiment as *Snapshots*. This is not, as it is apparently meant to be, "as metal singing hard, with firmness racked," but a statement robbed by arid formalism of most of the vitality it may be supposed to have possessed in the poet's mind. Far better metaphysical verse is *The Bitter Moon*, which begins as follows:

> Dry snow runs burning
> on the ground like fire —
> the quick of Hell spin on
> the wind. Should I believe
> in this your body, take it
> at its word? I have believed
> in nothing. Earth burns with a
> shadow that has held my
> flesh; the eye is a shadow
> that consumes the mind. . . .

And this is marred by two lines which are not greatly maligned by isolation from their context:

> Can you feel through Space,
> imagine beyond Time?

The words "Time" and "mind," indeed, suffer from repetition in Winters' verse. It is no disparagement to the depth and gravity of Winters' thinking to note that the poetic resultant of that thinking is lessened by an over-reliance on its generalities. A concrete instance of this is the effect on a sonnet, *The Fable*, of its closing lines, which dissipate a skilfully formed emotion into what is, by contrast, almost banality: "The mind alone is mind, and it must wait."

The sonnets best embody Winters' poetry of ideas, and are, in general, highly admirable. (One regrets, again, that the sonnet to Emily Dickinson was included.) But Winters' most important work is that in which he follows the lead of the most important school in literature today, and there is a possibility that he may yet produce something great and invulnerable as part of the contribution that school is making to English poetry. His achievement is already worthy of respect.

BOOK REVIEWS

II

The Gates of the Compass. *By Robert Hillyer. New York, The Viking Press.* 1930. $2.00.

Such poetry as the best of Mr. Hillyer's will probably hold an assured, if not an eminent, place in English literature. The maintenance of a lyric tradition (by which I mean keeping it alive) requires skill and sensitiveness of a high order, not to be decried by those whose interest lies in aggressive thrust and experiment. The extent to which this sentiment has permeated recent criticism appears in the welcome given *The Testament of Beauty* last year by all but the most desperate critics. Hillyer may conceivably come to mean for America a personality similar to that of the late poet laureate in England: accomplished, venerable, and unpopular. But his work will have to grow considerably in power and toughness before it can be matched as confidently with the future as can that of Jeffers or Frost. The mark of poetic excellence is always beyond the easy formulas of technicians or dilettantes, and except for the conventional value of any good writing, such formulas are worth very little to criticism. I have used "power and toughness" to describe in a vague way the quality of greatness which I do not find in Hillyer's poetry; in that sense, in that larger area of meaning, it is dangerous to go further. Judgments on matters of lesser importance are bound to be made in the course of this review.

The poems here published are concerned openly with the universal questions of love, time, and death as they have been lifted from the struggle of man's senses to an abstract precision and force. Hillyer treats these questions gently and carefully. The first part of *The Gates of the Compass* is an attempt to relate the memory of the individual to the memory of the race and to assert again the ultimate repose and happiness which exists beyond the confusion of these shadows. Two incidents in the poet's childhood are selected as symbols of his subjugation to destructive time and terrifying space: the first is his sorrow over the sinking of the Spanish fleet at Santiago, the second a game of blind man's buff in which he was frightened by being left alone in a dark room. He is thus led to remember, or imagine he remembers, the old jungle fear in the mind of his savage ancestor, fear of thunder and night. The poem has risen from the dream of an individual to the predicament of a race.

O desperate one,
Will you return to that dank world you left
Aeons ago, or plunging boldly through it
Traverse yet farther to that other day
Which lies beyond it, where the unbroken light
Before the worlds were, brought you into being.

The answer, given in a faith few of us can share, has still its old enchantment.

You shall yet see all things that knew the jungle
Shrink, while the spirit grows till it behold
This burnt-out planet smaller than an amber
Whirling from sight along an autumn wind.

The sound of such an affirmation in the teeth of modern metaphysics will be piteous to some, strong to others. Its value as poetry has to be determined with reference to such towers of darkness as the *Ulysses* of James Joyce or the fierce alien sorrow of Robinson Jeffers. So considered, it must take second rank both in rhetorical distinction and spiritual power. In foregoing irony, Hillyer has gained a certain fineness and elevation, but he has not transcended the larger agony which is the true universal of his age.

Part Two, *Death*, presents in simple detail the thoughts and images of corruption as they come to most of us, with the loss of love and the stupidity of forgetfulness.

Your loves dared not to think of you a while,
And then they merely did not think of you. . . .
The memory of you buried in the heart
Of one still living softly falls apart.
Your face upturned against the earth and rain
Outlasts the image of it in his brain,
Your phantom tread on stairways of his thought
Falters, recedes, grows fainter, and is gone.
Even your senseless immortality
Of grass rots in the rain.

It is evident here that Mr. Hillyer speaks directly to the deep, but unsophisticated thinker, and there is an admirable restraint and sincerity in his voice. At times this tone is made more ominous by a repetitive enjambement which contrasts perhaps too strongly with the generally unaffected verse:

> We come with leaden footsteps, we will wake
> You under the midnight, we will wake you under
> The midnight when the world has fallen away.

But the whole flow of the poem is quietly eloquent and clear.

In Part Three, *Ecstasy*, the rhythm depends to a much greater extent on the device noted above, here used with the proper abandon, and mounting almost to the intensity of Gertrude Stein at the end:

> We are the glory, we are the dancers, you
> Will dance with us, you will dance glory with us,
> Over the mountain, over the ocean, over
> The mountain, over the sea, beyond the mountain,
> Beyond the mountain and the sea. Beyond.

This section is not as successful as the preceding ones, but its light, quickened movement serves its purpose in the symphonic structure of the poem. From it one passes into the long andante of *Love*, the fourth section. I am not sure what this very imaginative and somewhat scented narrative means; it is not, at any rate, as good poetry as either *Memory* or *Death*. The sleeping beauty is wakened after a thousand years by the huntsman who dismounts in "a countryside bathed in the light of dream." Together they climb the hill of love and recount to each other their adventures in the thousand years of their separation: his those of bafflement and struggle with worldly and evil forces, hers dreams of him.

> I could not waken to this happiness
> Till you were weary of my counterfeits
> And sought me out and bade me rise, myself,
> None other, so made perfect in your love.

It appears that this dream paradise could only come true after a long ordeal for them both. They rest a while in their perfect happiness and candor, and then rise and go hand in hand over the second hill, toward the evening star. . . . However high its intention may be, it falls into the sentimental. One hears in it the pleasant but undisciplined music of Hillyer's earlier work. One might wish that *The Gates of the Compass* had been left without its final movement: incomplete but consistent in quality.

Besides this long poem, the book contains six sonnets, a Phi Beta Kappa Ode composed in 1929, and fourteen lyrics of various lengths. The sonnets are competently constructed and make their points neatly, but they lack the richness of texture that enables fourteen lines to live forever. The best of the short poems is *Dead Man's Corner*, a closely phrased and restrained war memory with more implicit emotional strength than is usual in Hillyer's verse. *In the Tidal Marshes* would perhaps be the most calmly perfect of all if it were not for an unfortunate technical slump in the middle. The Phi Beta Kappa Ode, written in hexameter stanzas, contends skilfully with its inspiration but is conquered in the end. It is over-stuffed and over-beautiful.

The book as a whole deserves praise for its constancy of feeling, its assurance in a cool philosophy supported by admirable craftsmanship in the traditional forms. Of all Hillyer's poems, these tend least to the merely "poetic" or to the academic, and give promise of an accomplishment that should endure.

ROBERT FITZGERALD

68

THE

Spring 1931

Hound & Horn

RAINER MARIA RILKE, Part I, *by* Hester Pickman

FOUR PRELUDES, *poems by* Conrad Aiken

THE ROUNDHOUSE, *a story by* John Kemmerer

GEORGE KELLY, *an essay by* Kenneth White

THE WIDE FILM, *a Chronicle by* Sergei Eisenstein

STRAWINSKY'S PSALMS, *a Chronicle by* Theodore Chanler

POEMS, *by* Eric Schroeder *and* John Wheelwright

CHRONICLES - PHOTOGRAPHS - BOOK REVIEWS

Rec'd APR 16 1931 P. L.

Fifty Cents

Mr. J. B. Priestley

wrote: *"IN America there are gentlemen called 'barkers.' They stand in front of the shows and bellow their attractions to the whole shrinking world. That is my rôle here, and proud I am to bark for* **THE LONDON MERCURY.** *I know no other periodical — I cannot even call to mind one of the past — that would have given hospitality to authors and stories so various."*

All that public of persons with taste should make a point of reading **THE LONDON MERCURY.** *It commands the best work in contemporary journalism and is "hospitable to every sort of sane experiment."*

Monthly, 75c

Yearly, $9.00

Send $1.00 for two specimen copies

The London Mercury

229 Strand, W.C.2

THE HOUND & HORN is published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, by THE HOUND & HORN, INCORPORATED. Publication Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Executive and Editorial Office, 10 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Single copies, 50 cents; subscriptions, one year $2.00, two years $3.50; Canadian subscriptions, one year $2.25; two years $4.00; foreign subscriptions, one year $2.50, two years $4.50. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Concord, New Hampshire, under the act of March 3, 1879.

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. IV, No. 3
April-June, 1931

CONTENTS

Rainer Maria Rilke, Part I, an essay by *Hester Pickman* 325

Four Preludes, poems by *Conrad Aiken* 366

The Roundhouse, a story by *John Kemmerer* 372

The Winter Palace, a poem by *Eric Schroeder* 382

George Kelly and Dramatic Device, an essay by *Kenneth White* 384

Wise Men on the Death of a Fool, a poem by *John Wheelwright* 401

CONTENTS

Chronicles

Music, on the Symphony of Psalms *Theodore Chanler* 403

Movie, on the Wide Film *Sergei Eisenstein* 406

Architecture, The New School and The Red Cross *Lyman Paine* 411

Correspondence

Letter from *Raymond Hood* 416

Letter from *Charles Moore* 417

Letter from *Dudley Fitts* 417

Book Reviews

"Savage Messiah," by H. S. Ede *Lincoln E. Kirstein* 419

"Charles Wm. Eliot," by Henry James *John Wheelwright* 428

"I'll Take My Stand," by twelve Southerners *Thomas Mabry* 436

"The Letters of Henry Adams" *Richard Blackmur* 440

"Animals in Greek Sculpture," by Gisela Richter
"Ancient Painting," by Mary Hamilton Swindeler
"Studies in Mediaeval Painting," by Bernhard Berenson *A. Hyatt Mayor* 447

"The Stricken Deer," by Lord David Cecil *Theodore Spencer* 450

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

1. The second part of Mrs. Pickman's essay on Rilke will contain translations of the Elegies and Lyrics, accompanied by the German text.

2. Conrad Aiken is finishing a second novel in England. His last book *John Deth and Other Poems* is published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

3. John Kemmerer's work has appeared in "The American Caravan." He now lives in New York. He has attended Grinnell College in Iowa, Harvard and Columbia.

4. Kenneth White has taught at Harvard, and reviews for The New Republic, The Nation, The Miscellany, etc.

5. Sergei Eisenstein, the director of "Ten Days That Shook the World" and "Armoured Cruiser Potemkin" is now in Mexico working on a silent film to be synchronized later.

6. Theodore Chanler has completed his first Mass.

7. Lyman Paine has worked for the firm of Delano and Aldrich and on an independent basis.

8. Thomas Mabry was born in Tennessee, went to Harvard and has grown tobacco.

9. Theodore Spencer is a tutor in the Department of English at Harvard.

Copyright, 1931, by The Hound & Horn, Incorporated

THE HOUND & HORN is published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, by The Hound & Horn, Incorporated. Bernard Bandler II and Lincoln E. Kirstein, Editors. Alan M. Stroock, Business Manager. Publication Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Executive and Editorial Office, 10 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Manuscripts *must* be accompanied by a stamped return envelope. Payment will be made on publication.

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. IV, No. 3 April-June, 1931

RAINER MARIA RILKE

THE exaggerated admiration that the French literary world has had for Poe, ever since Beaudelaire discovered him, is a warning to us against judging foreign verse. Lyric poetry belongs only to those in whose language it is written. Keats, Shelley, Blake and many others have never been given to the un-English world. They escape translation as taste and perfume escape vocabulary.

Now Rilke is such a poet as they, and as such it is folly to think of him in another language. We can get neither the music nor the mood nor the precision of emotion that lie in his words. Even if we read him in German a great deal must escape us unless we understand all its nuance of overtone and idiom. We can guess at the fragrance or think we find it and find pleasure in it, but we must not talk about it. It is only the qualities of thought that we can study in him, the material out of which that thought is made and what it helps us to see. Rilke divested of his magic is still important because he was one of those rare people who follow thought as far as it will lead them. He was still able to perceive at a point of inner experience where most men lose their bearings and come back to the surface. His poetry takes us carefully and surely through well defined curtains of illusion to a reality that is as unmistakable as daylight. It is an experience such as he once attributed to the death of a friend:

> And as you went there broke upon this play
> A strip of truth — it flooded through the crack
> By which you passed away:
> Green, real green, real woods, true light of day.[1]

It is said that a painter of genius must have some imperfection of sight that makes it hard for him to adjust his consciousness to the visible world. Perhaps poets have some such defect in their inner eye; it is certainly Rilke's case. He was incapable of getting used to life. He had no short cuts, no mathematical formulae for the handling of his sensibilities. However much appearance absorbed him — and none has ever described it with more precision — he always remained aware of the inner predicament and it is this that is always to be found at the exact center of his subject. His contemplation unfolded the surfaces of life layer after layer to reach the dark kernel that was seed and sense.

> You had no joy in shining
> Each color weighed upon you like a fault
> And you lived in restlessness
> For you said this is not all.[2]

This position and attitude of Rilke's mind has much in common with Christian mysticism. He was looking with the same singleness of purpose for the essence of life. His purpose, like theirs, was to know and serve, but he did not reach the unifying love of God that made all things clear to them. It was a darker thing that remained individualized in his perception. To actualize this perception was the aim of his poetry.

---

[1] Doch als du gingst, da brach in diese Bühne
ein Streifen Wirklichkeit durch jenen Spalt,
durch den du hingingst: Grün wirklicher Grüne,
wirklicher Sonnenschein, wirklicher Wald.
(Todeserfahrung, Gesammelte Werke, Bd. III, S. 63.)

[2] denn du warst nicht gerne im Glanze
jede Farbe lag auf dir wie Schuld,
und du lebtest in Ungeduld,
denn du wusstest: Das ist nicht das Ganze.
(Requiem, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 163.)

Seeking to hold this thing
in our simple hands, in our crowded gaze
and in the dumbness of our hearts.[3]

May it not be that we are here to say:
House, stream, bridge, doorway, pitcher, fruit tree, window
And at the most, column, tower,
but to say it, ah, understand me,
as in their hearts these had not thought of being.[4]

. . .

Sing of Earth to the angel; not inarticulate Earth,
Boast not of rapture to him, for you are but newly arrived
in a world where he feels more than you.
Show him rather the simple things, the man-made,
that race after race of the Earth have produced as their own,
and that lie in our sight still,
and near to our hands. Tell him of things.
Then will he stand by you and wonder, as you
stood once by the maker of rope, in Rome,
or by the potter in Egypt. Show him how happy
a thing can be, how blameless, how much ours.[5]

---

[3] wollens enthalten in unsern einfachen Händen,
im überfüllteren Blick und im sprachlosen Herzen.
(Die Neunte Elegie, Ges. W., Bd. III, S. 298.)

[4] Sind wir vielleicht hier, um zu sagen: Haus,
Brücke, Brunnen, Tor, Krug, Obstbaum, Fenster, —
höchstens: Säule, Turm . . . aber zu sagen, verstehs,
o zu sagen, wie selber die Dinge niemals
innig meinten zu sein.
(*Ibid.*, s. 298–299.)

[5] Preise dem Engel die Welt, nicht die unsägliche, ihm
kannst du nicht grosstun mit herrlich Erfühltem; im Weltall,
wo er fühlender fühlt, bist du ein Neuling, drum zeig

It would take too long to quote the whole passage, which is all in praise of transposing the essentials of human life into an object, a creation either in form or sound. In this Rilke placed the inherent dignity of man, a dignity dependent on fixing and holding some fragment of the eternal flux: — an aim of artists, and possibly of artisans. What he thought of any more active and worldly life, however unselfish, can be seen by his constant reference to its unreality. To him stones and plants and animals seem nearer to the truth than any man, for man cannot escape the false standards. It is our intricate consciousness that causes their falsity.

> For we alone see death; the beast is free,
> His passing lies behind and God before him,
> He passes by us in eternity as rivers pass.[6]
>
> . . . . .
>
> We are turned to face creation and of freedom
> see only a reflection in a mirror —
> That we ourselves have darkened.
> unless a beast, a dumb one, quietly
> gazes upon us, looks us through and through[7]

---

ihm das Einfache, das, von Geschlecht zu Geschlechtern gestaltet,
als ein Unsriges lebt neben der Hand und im Blick.
Sag ihm die Dinge. Er wird staunender stehn; wie du standest
bei dem Seiler im Rom, oder beim Töpfer am Nil.
Zeig ihm, wie glücklich ein Ding sein kann, wie schuldlos und unser.
(*Ibid.*, s. 299–300.)

[6] Ihn sehen wir allein; das freie Tier
hat seinen Untergang stets hinter sich
und vor sich Gott, und wenn es geht, so gehts
in Ewigkeit, so wie die Brunnen gehen.
(Die Achte Elegie, Ges. W., Bd. III, S. 293.)

[7] Der Schöpfung immer zugewendet, sehn
wir nur auf ihr die Spiegelung des Frei'n,
von uns verdunkelt. Oder dass ein Tier,
ein stummes, aufschaut, ruhig durch uns durch.
(*Ibid.*, s. 294.)

It is a point of view that lacks dramatic sense. The blending of many lives, many durations, into a reasoned whole is something he did not think of. He never wrote a passable play. His stories are all allegories or autobiography. The *Elegies of Duino* come nearer to building a philosophy but even that would have required "organization" and taken from their immediacy. He would not take up the cross of organic life, for organisms must be anti-spiritual. Hence his distaste for religions and for all forms of civic life that impose ready-made, inaccurate standards. His God was relegated to darkness that he might not have any part in this mechanical side of life, for light is a part of the machinery. The physical organization of the body impedes the soul, and inanimate things come nearer to true being.

This love of a passive dark is an important part of Rilke's thought. He wrote many things about the blind because their infirmity brings them nearer to truth. They are

a dark entrance to the Under-world
among a race who live upon its rind.[8]

In fact all imperfections of the body seem valuable to Rilke, because they constitute a liberation from the ready-made ways in which souls must be cramped and tortured. "On some days," he once wrote to a friend,

> "I see all creatures in such sorrow and trouble that it seems as though a pain might suddenly begin which would make them shriek, so great is my fear of the misuse that the body has in so many cases made of the soul, the soul which in animals has peace and in angels alone security." [9]

---

[8] der dunkle Eingang in die Unterwelt
bei einem oberflächlichen Geschlechte.
(Pont du Carrousel, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 43.)

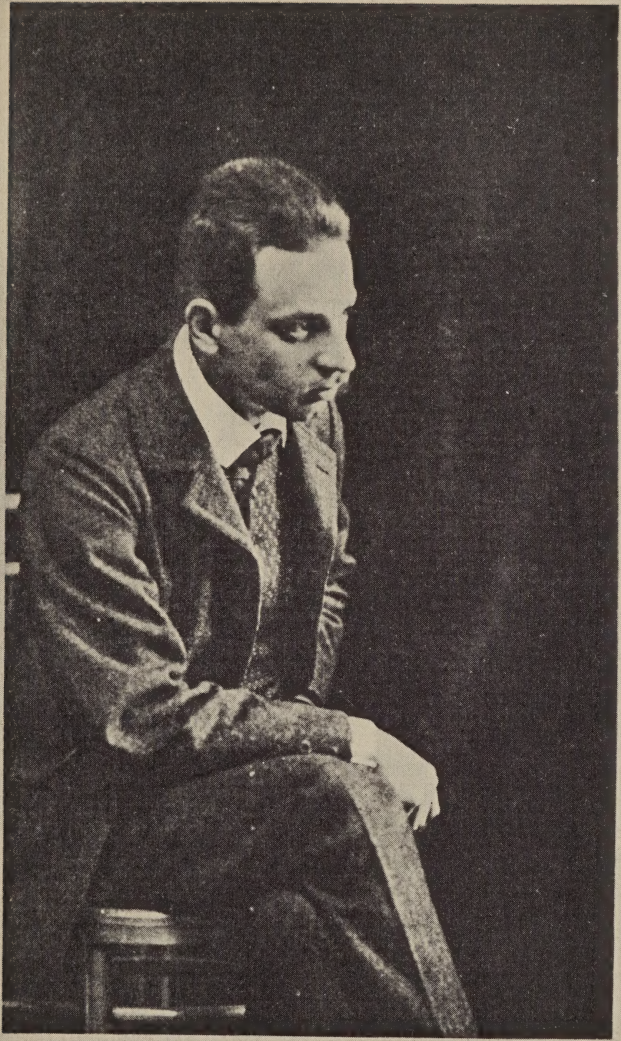
[9] Ich sehe manchen Tag alle Kreatur mit der Sorge an, es könnte in ihr ein

It is the healthy body he most fears. And so his books are filled with the old and the sick, the insane and the dying, and always their troubles seem to him so many rifts in the curtain of illusion. Children occupy him also because they have been only partly absorbed. Their pathos is that they must be drawn more and more away from reality until they are so trained that they can do nothing else but act in the senseless play. And death occupies him, which is the core of every life, the object of all fruition and the final liberation from illusion.

His attitude is always one of wondering and compassionate observation. It is an intellectual compassion that conceives of no way of helping; an isolated and hermetical sorrow. He has some faith in the salvation of souls and in the continuation of their life after death; but his faith is one that he never differentiates from an artist's faith in man's power of creation. It is this in Rilke that has led to his being called morbid, because it is an attitude that seems to have no direct relation to life. It would seem unreal to those absorbed by the world, and equally to those whose faith in God has led them to renounce it. But *morbid* is the wrong word because there is an honest courage in his work that defied self-pity. Its faults are rather obscurity and inconclusion. He is obscure out of choice because he mistrusted light; inconclusive because the solutions he offers apply only to his own problem. But though neither the world nor the saints may find comfort in Rilke, it is precisely this that makes him a poet of our time. Whatever his faults are, they are those of all contemporary art — an art of darkness and inconclusion. Only, Rilke has gone further than any one else. He has taken the burden of our life into his

---

Schmerz ausbrechen, der sie schreien macht, so gross ist meine Angst vor dem Missbrauch, den der Körper in so vielem mit der Seele treibt, die in den Tieren Ruhe hat und in den Engeln erst Sicherheit. (Lou Andreas-Salomé, P. 82.)



Rainer Maria Rilke
1906

solitude and has found it almost unbearable, yet he has had the courage to weigh it all and try to explain it to us. He has allowed no distractions to deceive him of his pain or to confuse his observation. He has not been afraid of pain and he has not tried to hide it in cynicism or to forget it in sensuality and swagger.

It would be interesting to compare him to Joyce and Proust, who have both gone far in the same direction. It seems to me that Rilke, though his work is on a smaller scale than either of theirs, has had the courage to go on where they turned back. Perhaps the metaphysically minded German in him found a reality in thoughts that seemed tenuous to them. He lives and breathes easily in a world of double reality where death never seems less beautiful or less important than life. It is a world full of fears because he must constantly deal with mysteries that have no solution, and which our human constitutions seem designed to ignore. Proust leads his people to the brink of the grave, he allows their characters to disintegrate and their personalities to become grotesque, but he never considers the infinite gulfs that lie on either side of their duration. Except for his chapter on the Sonate de Vinteuil the thought of these is never allowed to blur the precision of his situation. They lie beyond the pattern of his carpet. Joyce, on the other hand, is thoroughly preoccupied with them; but, finding them incomprehensible, they are dismissed with a wry joke. He allows *Ulysses* to close with an undistracted meditation on physical joy.

Rilke cannot forget, and is not afraid to face the incomprehensible. It was this constant preoccupation that destroyed his dramatic sense. He has left us no synthetic symbol of his world. He was too much absorbed by what lay behind all experience to have the time to fit what he knew into the architecture of an all-inclusive pattern. This is his defect as an artist.

He tells us often that the poet must be wholly occupied with Earth. But who can be thus absorbed who has not faith enough to forget the horror of eternal emptiness. I think it is the lack of faith in him that is at the root of his weakness. His own experience alone was real.

The Oxford Dictionary defines lyric poetry as that "which describes the author's own thoughts and sentiments." Rilke, as we have already said, was essentially a lyric poet. He had no faith and little interest in the thoughts of others. In his journey through contemplation he could use nobody's map.

> "I must ever be at odds," he wrote once in a letter, "with all that is inherited, because what I have acquired for myself is so slight. I am almost without culture. My constantly renewed efforts to embark on new studies end in disaster, owing to exterior circumstances and to the singular feeling, that always overcomes me in the midst of them, as though I were always going further away from an inborn knowledge and as though I were struggling on a road that after much winding would only lead me back to it." [10]

Rilke hardly ever refers to other authors. The stories of mythology and the Bible and certain scenes of history became for him the symbols of his own experience. He writes as one who is always travelling through new countries, a traveller whose perceptions were never dulled by use but who never stopped long enough to live in a house, far less to build one. His short poems are the notes and sketches of what he saw on the way. His three longer works are a summing up of all that he knew on the three stages of his journey. *The Book of Hours*, not published until 1905, was written between 1898 and 1903. The *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (Journal of My Other Self) was begun in 1904 and published in 1910. The *Elegies of Duino*, begun in 1912, was almost entirely written in 1923.

---

[10] . . . . gegen alles Ererbte muss ich feindselig sein, und mein Erworbenes ist so gering; ich bin fast ohne Kultur. Meine immer erneuten Versuche, ein bestimmtes Studium zu beginnen brachen kläglich ab; an äusseren Ursachen und an dem seltsamen Gefühl, das mich immer dabei überraschte; als ob ich von einem eingeborenen Wissen zurückkommen musste auf einen mühseligen Weg, der in vielen Windungen wieder dazu hinführt. (Briefe, 1902–1906, S. 120.)

II

> Ah! * There is so little accomplished by verses that are written when one is young. One should spend a whole life collecting sense and sweetness, and if possible a long life, and then, quite at the end, perhaps one might write ten lines that are good.[11]

The elegies were written when he was nearly fifty. Here the ten lines have grown into ten long poems that are a distillation of all that he had seen and felt. They are by far his most important work. They are complete in themselves and need no introduction; and yet I think that one can understand them better after following him through his earlier work; for they are so concentrated and so personal that it is hard to perceive their full meaning unless we know something of what came before.

One would like to know everything about Rilke. Unfortunately only a part of the records we need have been made accessible and we know only passages of his life. He was born in Prague in 1875 of an ancient Saxon aristocracy that had lived in Bohemia for several generations. His parents were not happy together and seem to have lived apart and to have disagreed as to his education. Of his childhood he once wrote that his mother cared only to see him in a new dress when she could show him to admiring friends, and that what love and care he received came from his father. It was his father's will that sent him, when he was ten years old, to the military academy of St. Pol where the little boy was so wretched that he finally ran away from it. An uncle took pity on him and helped him to finish his education at home, but the years of school remained an experience of such horror that to the end of his life he could hardly mention them. They only reappear in the references he so often makes in his writing to the stupid brutality with which the grown-up world forces young children into a false way of life. His education after that was continued in Prague and Berlin and Munich. In 1898 he made his first journey to Italy, the first of many journeys he was to make all over Europe. These were an essential part of his development, for the honey he packed into his work was gathered in many lands, and has a flavor which cannot be identified with any of them. Like Goethe, Rilke is unnational. They were meditative journeys, in which he was as likely to notice a beggar woman as a cathedral. They were also journeys of escape from people and obligations, for solitude was always his first necessity.

---

* All translation from the *Notebooks* are substantially based on those of John Linton, in *The Journal of My Other Self*, W. W. Norton & Co., N. Y., 1930.

[11] Ach, aber mit Versen ist so wenig getan, wenn man sie früh schreibt. Man sollte warten damit und Sinn und Süssigkeit sammeln ein ganzes Leben lang und ein langes womöglich und dann ganz zum schluss, vielleicht könnte man dann zehn Zeilen schreiben, die gut sind. (Aufzeichnungen . . . , Ges. W., Bd. V, S. 25.)

Rilke began writing poetry as a child; his first volume, published when he was nineteen, received a certain notice, but three years later he destroyed the edition and never allowed it to be reprinted. The first volumes to appear for good were *Larenopfer* and *Traumgekrönt* in 1898. His German critics say that the metre of these early poems is borrowed from the rhythm of Bohemian songs. Their music has the unmistakable accent of talent, but the material in them is slight and pervaded with a spiritual nostalgia that is immature.

Perhaps it was in Russia that he first found substance that could nourish him. He went there the next year, and often in after life he described that journey as a homecoming. For if the Slavic music in Rilke's native Bohemia was natural to him, it was because his relation to life was always more Slavic than Austrian. "I wondered," he once told a friend, "whether I ought not to write in Russian instead of in German, so much, as soon as I was in Russia, did I feel that I belonged there, while in my own country nothing seemed to be mine, neither the people nor the houses." * This, I think, was not so much the fault of Prague and the merit of Russia as the result of a nomadic inclination. But there was also a quality in Russia that was important to him. "It is a land," he wrote to another friend, "where men are solitary." The sense of civic organization so natural to the Germanic race is not a Russian trait, and the Soviets had not yet begun to foster it artificially. In its place there is, judging by almost any character in the novels and plays that have been translated, a sheer sense of reality that leads them to ignore the mechanics of life under the pressure of the inner predicament. It was this inner life that Rilke made the subject of all his work, and the *Book of Hours*, begun after his journey to Russia and finished four years later, is the first consecutive statement of his experience of it. A volume of short poems, the *Book of Pictures*, appeared before it was published, and there already are many beautiful things in this. To consider them too, however, would only confuse us: it is so much easier to measure his development by the sustained effort of a long poem.

---

* Journal: Charles Du Bos. p. 245.

We are also justified in this and other omissions by a passage in one of his letters written several years later, in which, after insisting that his point of view up to that time had only been clearly stated in the *Stunden-buch*, he says: "And you will have to agree with me, I think, when you see the spirit of the *Book of Hours* developed in still other books and made clearer." (Briefe, 1906–1907, S. 286.)

III

1.

The *Book of Hours* is a long collection of prayers in irregular rhyming stanzas. It is divided into three parts. The first is called "Of the Monastic Life," the second "Of the Pilgrimage," the third, "Of Poverty and Death." In the "Requiem of Karl von Kalckreuth" he names the three attributes essential to a poet. They are "space around his feelings," a "contemplation that desires naught" and "a well-wrought death." The *Requiem* was written at about the same time, and one can imagine that the *Book of Hours* fell naturally into these divisions.

In the *Monastic Life* he writes as a young monk about to begin his work, praying that he may find the stillness and darkness necessary to perceive God and to build Him. For the artist it is who both builds Him and hides Him with his images, for images are made of light and God is the darkness which contains all things.

I am too much alone in the world
and yet not alone enough
to make each hour holy.
and I am too small in the world
and yet not small enough

to stand before You like a thing —
dark and prudent.[12]

And yet the poet is the dream of God which must be realized.

My life is not this steep hour
up which you see me hurrying.
I am the tree whose background I still am.
I am but one of many mouths,
the first one to be closed;
a pause between two cries that are opposed
because death cries too loud.[13]

But how realize this dream when

I am slipping away like sand
through the fingers of one hand
I have so many senses that all else
is thirsty and undone.[14]

And since to God he must say

Thou art so great that I must cease to be
whenever I come near to Thee.

---

[12] Ich bin auf der Welt zu allein und doch nicht allein genug,
um jede Stunde zu weihn.
Ich bin auf der Welt zu gering und doch nicht klein genug,
um vor dich zu sein wie ein Ding,
dunkel und klug.
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 182.)

[13] Mein Leben ist nicht diese steile Stunde,
darin du mich so eilen siehst.
Ich bin ein Baum vor meinem Hintergrunde
ich bin nur einer meiner vielen Munde
und jener, welcher sich am frühsten schliesst.
Ich bin die Ruhe zwischen zweien Tönen,
die sich nur schlecht aneinander gewöhnen:
denn der Ton Tod will sich erhöhn —
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 186.)

[14] Ich verrinne, ich verrinne
wie Sand, der durch Finger rinnt.
Ich habe auf einmal so viele Sinne,
die alle anders durstig sind.
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 189.)

Thou art so dark that my small gleam
can have no meaning on Thy vesture's hem;
and Thy great will is like a passing wave
in which each day must find its grave.
Only my longing reaches to Thy chin
and stands there as the mightiest of angels.[15]

We must build God as man builds a ship, but how? We must build Him as a tree grows. Italy was a branch of God that bloomed to a full flower, yet bore no fruit. That was the spring of God. Now we must have His summer growing out of a solitude in which the flower may bear fruit. This solitude is one of fear — the fear of death — for what, if I die, would become of God? He speaks then of those fears that pass like monks in the cloister, so identical that he does not know if they are one or many; and of the great lust that sweeps over him and leaves him with shame for a bridegroom.

It is time that is at the root of fear and lust, time that is the contradiction of God; His deepest sorrow. Lucifer is the prince of Time. Time, that poor town. Time, that faded border of a page. Time that grew out of "light, first word of God." Man was his second word. We do not want his third; but all who raise their hands outside of time must say that prayer alone exists, and this is so

---

[15] Du bist so gross, dass ich schon nicht mehr bin,
wenn ich mich nur in deine Nähe stelle.
Du bist so dunkel: meine kleine Helle
an deinem Saum hat keinen Sinn.
Dein Wille geht wie eine Welle,
und jeder Tag ertrinkt darin.

. . . . . .

Nur meine Sehnsucht ragt dir bis ans Kinn
und steht vor dir wie aller Engel grösster,
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 192.)

Whether we paint or reap
and even in the clattering of tools
a holiness unfolds.[16]

The poets have scattered Thee
(a storm swept through all stammering)
and I must gather Thee again
in the vessel that will give Thee joy.[17]

And I can only gather Thee in a dark quietness
For Thou hast such a gentle way of being
that they who hallow Thee with many names
forget how near Thou art.[18]

Thou, willing One, Thy graces ever flow
Out of the oldest gestures
He who holds his hands together, so
That they enfold a tiny dark —
Must feel Thee grow
In him, and bows
in shame
And bends as though a great wind came.[19]

---

[16] ob einer malte oder mähte,
schon aus dem Ringen der Geräte
entfaltet sich Frömmigkeit.
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 203.)

[17] Die Dichter haben dich verstreut
(es ging ein Sturm durch alles Stammeln),
ich aber will dich wieder sammeln
in dem Gefäss, das dich erfreut.
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 214.)

[18] Du hast so eine leise Art zu sein,
Und jene, die dir laute Namen weihn,
sind schon vergessen deiner Nachbarschaft.
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 223.)

[19] Du Williger, und deine Gnade kam
immer in alle ältesten Gebärden.
Wenn einer die Hände zusammenflicht,
so dass sie zahm
und um ein kleines Dunkel sind —
auf einmal fühlt er dich in ihnen werden,

It is this darkness and stillness that the poet must have. This is the space around his feelings.

2.

The "Book of Pilgrimage" begins with a description of autumn. Summer was a dwelling that we must now leave. We have been scattered and destroyed like a half-burnt house and become strange to ourselves. We have become like those who cannot sleep and can only invoke Him

> Who is dark and mightier than night.
> The only one who though he have no lamp
> is not afraid
> that depth Whom light has never spoiled
> and Whom I know
> because he breaks out of the earth in trees,
> and rises up in fragrance from the earth
> to my bowed face.[20]

And we can love Him not as a father but as a son one leaves behind; the heir who has become a king.

> For can one love a father? Does not one go away from Him
> As you went from me, with a hard face
> leaving his hands helpless and empty?
> Does one not lay his faded sentences

---

und wie im Winde
senkt sich sein Gesicht
in Scham.
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 223.)

[20] der dunkel ist und nächtiger als Nacht,
den Einzigen, der ohne Lampe wacht
und doch nicht bangt; den Tiefen, den das Licht
noch nicht verwöhnt hat und von dem ich weiss,
weil er mit Bäumen aus der Erde bricht
und weil er leis
als Duft in mein gesenktes Angesicht
aus Erde steigt.
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 235.)

between the pages of an ancient book not often read?
Does one not flow out of his heart
as down a watershed to joy or sorrow? [21]

God shall be my only begotten son and inherit all that is beautiful and all things shall overflow for Him like fountains.

No man can live his life completely. There should be warehouses for what might have been, and yet all life is lived because God lives it and all God asks of us is that we endure His life and rest in it as in the earth's gravity. We must live in God as if He were a great country through which we can travel but which we can never leave; a country of steppes like Russia, where villages stand in open space.

The kings of this world can have no heirs. Man has made a master of machinery, but the metal longs for the dark mine again and God's greatness will triumph till there is nothing left at last but land and sea.

Huge trees and little walls
and in the valley strong and many sided
a race of herds and tillers of the soil.
No churches that besiege thee, God, with cries
as though for one in flight — no pitying Thee
as if thou were a beast captured and wounded.[22]

---

[21] Liebt man denn einen Vater? Geht man nicht,
wie du von mir gingst, Härte im Gesicht,
von seinen hilflos leeren Händen fort?
Legt man nicht leise sein verwelktes Wort
in alte Bücher, die man selten liest?
Fliesst man nicht wie von einer Wasserscheide
von seinem Herzen ab zu Lust und Leide?
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 236.)

[22] die Bäume riesig und sehr klein die Mauern;
und in den Tälern, stark und vielgestaltig,
ein Volk von Hirten und von Ackerbauern.
Und keine Kirchen, welche Gott umklammern
wie einen Flüchtling und ihn dann bejammern
wie ein gefangenes und wundes Tier, —
(Das Stunden-Buch, Ges. W., Bd. II, S. 255.)

No waiting any more on the hereafter; no gazing across the way[23]

And let the streets be ever filled with those
who seek for Thee as men might seek a rose
that blooms but once in every thousand years.
A darkened people almost without name
Who, when at last they reach You, will be lame.[24]

Let poets be a procession of such pilgrims, for autumn is here and there is no joy to be had. God forgive us if we call anything ours.

They say: my life, my dog, my child, my wife,
and yet know well that these — life, child, and dog and wife —
are but the unknown pictures that they find
groping with outstretched hands and blind.[25]

And when one clutches at You in the night,
and forces You to come into his prayer,
You come, but as a guest,
to leave again.[26]

---

[23] Kein Jenseitswarten und kein Schaun nach drüben (*Ibid.*, S. 255.)

[24] Die Strassen werden derer niemals leer,
die zu dir wollen wie zu jener Rose,
die alle tausend Jahre einmal blüht.
Viel dunkles Volk und beinah Namenlose,
und wenn sie dich erreichen, sind sie müd.
(*Ibid.*, S. 256.)

[25] So sagen sie: mein Leben, meine Frau,
mein Hund, mein Kind, und wissen doch genau,
dass alles: Leben, Frau und Hund und Kind
fremde Gebilde sind, daran sie blind
mit ihren ausgestreckten Händen stossen.
(*Ibid.*, S. 264.)

[26] Und wenn dich einer in der Nacht erfasst,
so dass du kommen musst in sein Gebet:
Du bist der Gast,
der wieder weitergeht.
(*Ibid.*, S. 265.)

So let the poet be he who like an eternal pilgrim passes in "contemplation, desiring naught."

3.

The third book, "Of Poverty and Death," is a plea for the understanding of sorrow and for "the well-wrought death."

For I have not yet grown wise in sorrow —
make Thou that this great darkness become small;
and yet if it be Thou: grow hard, break through
that Thy whole hand be felt on me
and I with all my cry be heard by Thee.[27]

In the first book God orders him to sing

Time is my deepest woe,
and in that chalice
I laid the wakeful and invulnerable woman
and wealthy death (that I might count his coin),
and the dread Bacchanalia of cities,
and madness, too, and kings.[28]

And now in his third book he finds that cities contain in themselves the hardest and most persistent of earth's sorrows.

The great cities, Lord,
are lost and scattered

---

[27] Ich bin ja noch kein Wissender im Wehe, —
so mach mich dieses grosse Dunkel klein;
bist du es aber: mach dich schwer, brich ein:
dass deine ganze Hand an mir geschehe
und ich an dir mit meinem ganzen Schrein.

(*Ibid.*, S. 269.)

[28] Die Zeit ist mir mein tiefstes Weh,
so legte ich in ihre Schale:
das wache Weib, die Wundenmale,
den reichen Tod (dass er sie zahle),
der Städte bange Bacchanale,
den Wahnsinn und die Könige.

(*Ibid.*, S. 213.)

The greatest are but a flight from flame:
there is no comfort left to comfort them
and their small Time runs out —[29]

There children are exiled — there maidens bloom to a blind motherhood, and pale men live as slaves of aimless things — and Death cannot grow ripe. That is the horror of it — Death, the object of life, the seed we carry in us, can never be completed here. The angels of God have passed over us like flocks of birds, only to find that all our fruit is green — an abortion of death.

The crooked, trouble-laden Embryo,
that holds (as though it feared some frightfulness)
its hands before its half-completed eyes
and on whose high-domed forehead sits the fear
of all those things which it has never suffered, —[30]

Then the poet prays for a Redeemer, and prays that he may be his prophet,

Then will I flower in my lyre playing
as gently as the northern April's bloom
as late as they and careful of each leaf.[31]

---

[29] Denn, Herr, die grossen Städte sind
Verlorene und Aufgelöste:
wie Flucht vor Flammen ist die grösste, —
und ist kein Trost, dass er sie tröste,
und ihre kleine Zeit verrinnt.
(*Ibid.*, S. 271.)

[30] den krummen, kummervollen Embryo,
der sich (als ob ihn Schreckliches erschreckte)
die Augenkeime mit den Händen deckte
und dem schon auf der ausgebauten Stirne
die Angst von allem steht, was er nicht litt, —
(*Ibid.*, S. 275.)

[31] dann will ich blühn in meinem Saitenspiele
so leise wie die nördlichen Aprile
die Spät und ängstlich sind um jedes Blatt.
(*Ibid.*, S. 278.)

There were rich places once: camps of shepherd tribes, the faded carpets where Arabs slept, who could give rubies to their concubines, and the trading ports of Greece,

These were the empires by whom life was forced
to yield its space and warmth and heaviness.
That opulence is gone, nor do we ask
to have it back again; but grant us this:
that all the poor may be the poor once more.
They are not now. But only the not rich
who have no will and are without a world [32]
marked with the last mark of Fear
scattered everywhere and out of place.

And yet if Thy Earth were in trouble
She'd string them all into her rosary
that she might wear them as a Talisman.
For the truly poor are purer than a stone
pure as the blind beginning of the beast
and simple and immeasurably Thine,
desiring naught and needing but one thing.[33]

---

[32] Das waren Reiche, die das Leben zwangen,
unendlich weit zu sein und schwer und warm.
Aber der Reichen Tage sind vergangen,
und keiner wird sie dir zurückverlangen,
nur mach die Armen endlich wieder arm.
Sie sind es nicht. Sind nur die Nicht-Reichen,
die ohne Willen sind und ohne Welt;
gezeichnet mit der letzten Aengste Zeichen
und überall entblättert und entstellt.

(*Ibid.*, S. 281–282.)

. . . . .

[33] und doch: wenn deine Erde Nöte hätte:
sie reihte sie an eine Rosenkette
und trüge sie wie einen Talisman.
Denn sie sind reiner als die reinen Steine
und wie das blinde Tier, das erst beginnt,
und voller Einfalt und unendlich deine
und wollen nichts und brauchen nur das eine:

(*Ibid.*, S. 282.)

And God Himself is poverty:

> Poor as the unborn child
> whose mother fears its birth[34]
>
> or like the flowers
> that bloom between steel tracks,
> sad and poor in the mad wind of travels;[35]

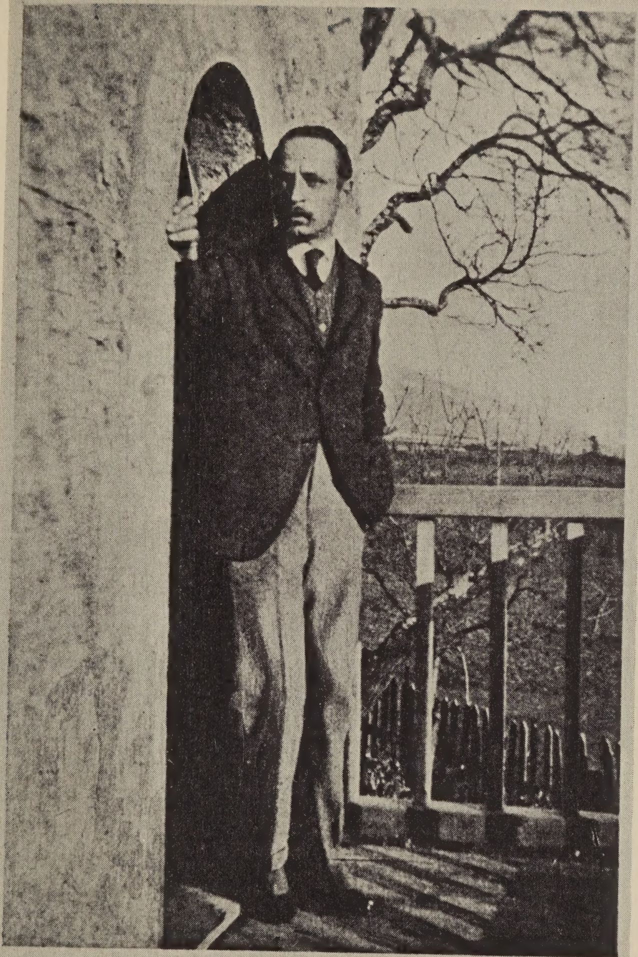
One would like to quote pages of this Hymn to Poverty. It is a theme we will find developed again in the Malte, and is important in Rilke's thought; a thought that often appears indistinguishable from the Sermon on the Mount.

But, although there are many passages in the *Book of Hours* that might have fallen out of the writings of Christian contemplatives, the essential pattern is an inversion of theirs. God is not light but darkness — not a father, but a son, not the creator but the created. He and not man is our neighbor for men are infinitely far from each other. They must seek God, not where one or two are gathered in His name, but alone. The search is also inverted. The young monk begins by experiencing the presence of God; then he seeks Him and seeking Him finds not His Kingdom and His Justice, but Poverty and Death that are not only a way to life but life itself. Even this inversion might be Christian — for darkness, isolation and negation are all commonplaces of the mystic experience — if it did not clearly form a part of the antagonism to Christianity that one finds in all Rilke's writing. There is a warm and living piety in these poems that implies a sense

---

[34] Du bist so arm wie eines Keimes Kraft
in einem Mädchen, das es gern verbürge
(*Ibid.*, S. 283.)

[35] wie Blumen in Geleisen
so traurig arm im irren Wind der Reisen;
(*Ibid.*, S. 283.)



Rilke an der Eingangstür zum Château de Muzot
Herbst 1923

of God's immediate presence. Yet even in the few passages quoted, we have seen how Rilke minimizes the possibility of divine intercourse. Prayer for him lay not in a conscious union with God, but in man's creative activity.

> And in six days God created only a hand and He poured water over it and arched the sky above it and after it was all made He rested, and it was a splendor and a hand. (Briefe, 1902–1906, S. 111.)

It was then for man to make the rest.

But to analyze these Rilkian dogmas can lead us only to theological discussions which would be out of place. For Rilke is a poet and not a theologian. His convictions are not very different from those that lie at the base of modern thought. Rilke's importance lies not in his ideas but in the persistence and precision of their demonstration. He is not afraid of them — not afraid of the subterranean places that they lead to.

The *Book of Hours* is essential to the understanding of what comes afterwards because it fixes the direction of all his future journeys and describes a road which is so familiar to him that he will later refer to it as if we too must know every turn it takes. And we are rewarded for following him because groping beside him we too can grasp, with a heart-breaking certainty, the shape of all he felt. But in spite of much that is very beautiful the *Book of Hours* remains too constantly abstract. It lacks the solid reality of great poetry. Of the point of view that produced it he was later to write

> Nature was then to me a universal inducement, an evocation, an instrument on whose strings my hands found themselves. I had not yet sat down to scrutinize her. I was carried away by the soul that went out from me. Nature came to me

> with her distances, with her excessive Being, as Prophecy came over Saul — in just that way. I walked to and fro and saw, not nature, but only the visions she administered.[36]

It was in learning to see that his development was to lie.

IV

While the *Book of Hours* was being written Rilke was married to Clara Westhoff, a pupil of Rodin's. The letters that have been published are concerned with the important years which followed. In 1902 we find him in Paris composing his essay on the master and spending many hours in his company. His letters describe the process of a new development. Rodin's influence, whether through his power or because of Rilke's need, was at the centre of it. His personality took on a huge importance. He became the redeemer of the *Stundenbuch.* He appeared to the younger artist as one in complete control of his creative forces. In a letter Rilke says,

> Deep inside of himself he carried the darkness of a shelter. He himself had become the sky over it and the woods around it and a great stream flowing by. (Briefe, 1902–1906, S. 110.)

And in another letter,

> I suffered from the excess of the example for which my art seemed to provide no means of imitation. The impossibility of physical sculpture became a pain in my own body and that fear (whose substance was the proximity of something too hard, too stony and too big) also sprang from the impossibility of uniting two worlds of art. (*Ibid.*, S. 118.)

---

[36] aber damals war mir die Natur noch ein allgemeiner Anlass, eine Evokation, ein instrument, in dessen Saiten sich meine Hände wiederfanden; ich sass noch nicht vor ihr; ich liess mich hinreissen von der Seele, welche von mir ausging; sie kam über mich mit ihrer Weite, mit ihrem grossen übertriebenen Dasein, wie das Prophezeien über Saul kam; genau so. Ich schritt einher und sah, sah nicht die Natur, sondern die Gesichte, die sie mir eingab. (Briefe 1906–1907, S. 377.)

There is an uncomfortable note of adoration in some of Rilke's letters about Rodin. It is a deification. He is a star, he is greater than all, his life is a stream whose banks have become invisible. This was because he at that moment appeared to Rilke as the cause in him of a spiritual transformation — of a conversion to the faith and worship of the visible. Rilke suddenly began to see with new eyes.

> Only things speak to me. Rodin's things, the things that belong to Gothic cathedrals, the antique — all things that are completely things. They lead me back to their models; back to the moving, living world, that is seen simply and without interpretation and only as a provocation to the making of things. I am beginning to see in a new way: flowers already mean so much and animals have caused me strange excitement. And now too I can often experience men thus, and hands live somewhere for me and mouths speak and I look at everything more quietly and with more justice.[36a]

Three years later, after much time spent in Scandinavia, in Italy and in different parts of Germany he became Rodin's secretary. He had by that time assimilated all that the sculptor could give him and though his reverence for the old man remained, it is clear from Rilke's letters that he found him impossible to live with. If Rodin were so well able to live his own life, it seems to have been by completely ignoring the necessities of those around him. By March 1906 Rilke is writing from Meudon as from a jail. Then something happened. Rodin in turn seems to have had enough of Rilke, and we have Rilke's letter to him written after a final separation

---

[36a] Nur die Dinge reden zu mir. Rodin's Dinge, die Dinge an den gotischen Kathedralen, die antikischen Dinge — alle Dinge, die volkommene Dinge sind. Sie wiesen mich auf die Vorbilder hin; auf die bewegte lebendige Welt, einfach und ohne Deutung gesehen als Anlass zu Dingen. Ich fange an, Neues zu sehen: schon sind mir Blumen oft so unendlich viel, und aus Tieren kamen mir Anregungen seltsamer Art. Und auch Menschen erfahre ich schon manchmal so, Hände leben irgenwo, Munde reden, und ich schaue alles ruhiger und mit grösserer Gerechtigkeit. (*Ibid.*, S. 116.)

> I understand — the wise organism of your life that must reject what appears to impede its functions, as the eye casts out what interferes with sight. . . . (*Ibid.*, S. 322.)

He is then alone again and able to write. A year later appeared the first volume of the *New Poems;* in these it is clear that a great change had been brought about. The nostalgic prettiness of his early poems, still often found in the *Book of Pictures*, has disappeared, and the despairing mysticism of the *Book of Hours* has been given a solid medium. They are almost all short poems of twenty lines or less and in each we find a compactness that recalls French mediaeval sculpture. Reality looks out at us as from the capitals of those Romanesque columns that Rilke loved — a flower, an old man, a statue, an ancient story retold, a procession of children. There are so many excellent poems that it is impossible to choose. The "Panther of the Jardin des Plantes" is only an example taken at random:

His gaze has grown so weary passing
between bars it has let all else fall.
To him there seem to be a thousand bars
and beyond a thousand bars no world at all.

The softness of that strong and supple pacing
Whose narrowed circling is never still,
Is as a dancing force that hypnotizes
and numbs the strength of his huge will.

Only from time to time the pupils' lid
dilates without a sound and pictures start,
start through the waiting stillness of the limbs,
and cease to be when they have reached the heart.[37]

---

[37] Sein Blick ist vom Vorübergehn der Stäbe
so müd geworden, dass er nichts mehr hält.

It is as if his meditations on Rodin had forced him to isolate each subject in a consciousness of its three dimensions. The inner unapparent life that remains Rilke's essential subject acquired thereby a definiteness that is almost tangible. His tenderness is no longer a mere longing; it has developed into the sense not only of infinitely varied surface, but also of infinitely varied color. For it is not only Rodin's influence that can be traced in them. Judging by his letters of 1907 the effect on him of French painting and especially of Cézanne's work was of even greater importance. His letters about the exhibition of Cézanne in 1907 have some of the most beautiful passages of his prose. In his praise of him one feels no sense of strain or exaggeration. It was easier for Rilke to canonize such humble, isolated, undistracted honesty. There had been a premature odor of incense around Rodin not to be detected in the accounts of that ill-lighted studio in Aix where Cézanne,

> laid his apples on bedspreads that Madame Brémond would surely one day be looking for, and set wine bottles among them and anything else he might find and made his "Saints" of such things, and forced them, forced them to be beautiful and to signify the whole world and all joy and all splendor, and

---

Ihm ist, als ob es tausend Stäbe gäbe
und hinter tausend Stäben keine Welt.

Der weiche Gang geschmeidig starker Schritte,
der sich im allerkleinsten Kreise dreht,
ist wie ein Tanz von Kraft um eine Mitte,
in der betäubt ein grosser Wille steht.

Nur manchmal schiebt der Vorhang der Pupille
sich lautlos auf — Dann geht ein Bild hinein,
geht durch der Glieder angespannte Stille —
und hört im Herzen auf zu sein.
(Neue Gedichte, Gesammelte Werke, Bd. III, S. 44.)

> yet never knew whether or not he had been able to make them do this for him. (Briefe, 1906–1097, S. 369.)

But no single influence must be given undue importance in the story of Rilke's development. It was the growth of his own powers that made him gather strength from all the nourishment that lay around him. He himself attributed a great deal to Paris. His most fruitful times were spent there, living for several months at a stretch and over a period of many years in the small furnished bedroom of some cheap boarding house, a solitude that was for the most part only broken by lunching in a "crêmerie" or walking in the Luxembourg Gardens.

> The claim this city makes upon one is immeasurable and uninterrupted. (To her I owe the best that I am now able to do.) She does not give immediate and direct aid in artistic pursuits, she does not in a way affect the work one is doing, — but she transforms, strengthens and develops one, — she gently takes the tools out of one's hand that one had been using until then and replaces them with others infinitely finer and more precise. . . . (*Ibid.*, S. 236.)

The precision of these tools changed the music of Rilke's verse into something much severer than that of his earlier period. For even in the *Book of Hours* music still seems to play around the thought, dazzling our understanding of it. This is now no longer true. In these *New Poems* the music and meaning are woven so closely that they are indistinguishable. Perhaps it was in order to escape for a time from the temptation and distraction of metre that he turned next to prose.

V

The *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* were begun in Rome in 1903 and completed seven years later. They purport to be the memories and reflections of a young Dane. The English translation has been called "The Journal of My Other Self" which is accurate enough, though I think Rilke would rather have it uncertain whether he and Malte are really identical. It is true that in his letters there are many passages that are paralleled in the *Notebook*, and yet in other letters of the same period Malte is often referred to as one whose life must have taken a direction that separated him from Rilke.

The subject of the *Book of Hours* still lies at the base of it. It is a search for God — but the search is no longer confined to his own consciousness; we travel with him through a world peopled with men and women, contemporary or long since dead, whose reality he lays bare through a minute scrutiny of appearance and gesture. It has been compared to Proust. Both delve below the surface with the same precise knowledge of what is happening there, and in both the characters remain essentially alone; but *Le Temps Perdu* is a worldly picture of man. Proust is absorbed by the bodily and social peculiarities of his characters, whereas Rilke can never forget their ultimate problems. His accurate descriptions have a pathos, a sense of nightmare and a fantastic humor very different from the clear Latin irony of Proust — Rilke's knife exposes the disparity of body and soul, the disparity of man's insignificant actions and the vastness of his consciousness. Then Proust makes nothing more than a statement of what he has observed, whereas Rilke, as some one has very rightly said, turns everything into a parable. One might call this book "A parable of masks." In the *Book of Pilgrimage* he had said:

> Men are accidents, voices and fragments,
> commonplaces, fears and little joys,

disguised in infancy by mummeries
speaking through masks with faces that are dumb.[38]

In *Malte* he tries to pierce these masks — and what he finds behind them is always that terror of death that he describes in the *Book of Hours*, and, growing out of that, a fear of showing one's self to the world as one really is. He finds that pure love is the only reality that can tear off this mask and transform those fears into a still greater reality, and yet at the same time he finds that love almost impossible.

This is the main theme of *The Notebooks*. They are a continuation of the *Book of Poverty and Death*, a more complete meditation on the sorrows of Time. Woman the wakeful and invulnerable, wealthy death, cities, madness and kings — are all considered with an apparent inconsequence. The meditation is illustrated as dreams are with vivid, disconnected pictures of life. The pattern that he holds to lies so deep below the varied surface that it may be recognized only as is the unity of a man's character. One has to read the book many times before it becomes apparent, and then it is hard to know if what one has found is accurate. The analysis which follows is but a variant of several possible ones.

I

The work is divided into two parts. The first might be called the Book of Childhood. Malte presents himself to us at the age of twenty-eight, in a Paris smelling of "iodoform, *pommes frites* and fear" and peopled by street venders and little shopkeepers, blind men and feeders of birds and many who are sick. Touching figures are scattered through it, all of whom we might ourselves meet any day in the Rue de Seine or the Luxembourg Gardens. Malte is a young writer afflicted with a nervous disorder indistinguishable from a sense of inner transformation.

---

[38] Zufälle sind die Menschen, Stimmen, Stücke,
Alltage, Aengste, viele kleine Glücke,
Verkleidet schon als Kinder, eingemummt,
als Masken mündig, als Gesicht verstummt.
(Das Buch von der Pilgerschaft, Ges. W., II, S. 241.)

> I am learning to see. I do not know why it is, but everything penetrates me more deeply and no longer stops at the place where until now it always used to finish.[38]

And this change is based on his conviction that the essential fact of life is that death is the fruit of it — a fruit that we ourselves must ripen by living the life we were made for.

> Is it possible that despite our discoveries and progress, despite our culture, religion and world wisdom, we still remain on the surface of life? Is it possible that we have even covered this surface, which might have been something, with an incredibly uninteresting stuff which makes it look like drawing-room furniture during the summer holidays? [39]
> Is it possible that all realities are nothing to them, that their life runs on, unconnected with anything, like a watch in an empty room? (*Ibid.*, S. 30.)

All that Malte had written up to this time was false. For he wrote about feelings not based on experience.

> And it is not memories in themselves that matter. Only when they have turned to blood within us, to glance and gestures, nameless, no longer to be distinguished from ourselves — only

---

[38] (Aufzeichnungen, Ges. W. Bd. V, S. 9.)

[39] Ist es möglich, dass man trotz Erfindungen und Fortschritten, trotz Kultur, Religion und Weltweisheit an der Oberfläche des Lebens geblieben ist? Ist es möglich dass man sogar diese Oberfläche, die doch immerhin etwas gewesen wäre, mit einem unglaublich langweiligen Stoff überzogen hat, so dass sie aussieht wie die Salonmöbel in den Sommerferien? (*Ibid.*, S. 29.)

> then can it happen that in some rare hour the first word of a poem arises in their midst and goes out from them. (*Ibid.*, S. 27.)

He must search into the past for what is significant there, the past of childhood, the past found in books, the past of an hour ago. In the beginning of the book Malte is homesick:

> Oh what a happy fate, to sit in the quiet room of an ancestral house, surrounded only by calm, sedentary things . . . (*Ibid.*, S. 53.)
> But it has fallen out otherwise God knows why. My old furniture is rotting in a barn where I have been allowed to put it, while I myself — yes, my God! — I have no roof over me and the rain is driving into my eyes. (*Ibid.*, S. 54.)

Now Rilke, as we find in his letters, had deliberately chosen to live this way himself, and Malte is made to do the same from necessity — that he may see and hear and understand that misery which alone penetrates the surface of life.

A meditation on death runs through it all — beginning with a consideration of the wholesale deaths that are died in institutions designed for that purpose, and then of old-fashioned deaths such as that huge one of Chamberlain Brigge, his grandfather, that frightened the countryside. To study fear he goes back into his childhood where the fears began: to the weeks spent in a haunted castle where his widowed father had gone to visit his family-in-law — a family of people who, although related, have no spiritual connection with each other and who are here gathered around a very old man for whom past, present and future have all become confused, who, for instance, sees no reason why his relatives are not polite to the ghost that appears so often. Little Malte sees the strange and sudden fears of grown-ups when the ghostly lady passes through the room.

Then he goes still further back to the time when his mother lived — to the feverish nightmares that her presence dispels, because she comes and keeps the monstrous thing behind her and puts herself in front of it completely, not like a curtain that can be lifted here and there. His mother was not one to wear a mask. Her fears and her love live with her on the surface, but there are others who hide them. The old dog, for instance, and the pastor "who had been appointed to the faculty of soul" and who "was never off duty," and Margarite Brigge, the grandmother, who would never hear death spoken of, even in her own house, even of her own daughter's, and who had buried her real self and her disappointments

> so deep in her and covered them with layers, many hard brittle layers of slightly metal-sheened shell, that layer which was for the time being uppermost appearing quite cool and new. (*Ibid.*, S. 145.)

The sense of human disguise is especially concentrated in the scene of his childhood when, having found a cupboard of old costumes, the little Malte dresses himself in voluminous garments and puts a mask on his face, then suddenly sees his reflection in a mirror.

> I stared at this great terrifying, unknown personage before me and it seemed appalling to me that I should be alone with him. But at the very moment when I was thinking this, the worst befell: I lost all knowledge of myself, I simply ceased to exist. (*Ibid.*, S. 130.)

His terrors make it impossible to take off the disguise and he runs through the house calling for help until he faints at the feet of the laughing servants.

The first Book ends with his understanding of Abelone's beauty. She is his mother's much younger sister and is to continue for Malte that revelation which his mother began — the revelation of the feminine attitude. The last pages are a description of the Cluny Tapestries, addressed to Abelone who, better than he, will understand the mystery that hangs about that lady and her contented animals:

> a festival to which no one is invited. Expectation plays no part in it. Everything is here. Everything and forever. (*Ibid.*, S. 156.)

II

The second part is still concerned with memories of childhood, but of a childhood merging into another state not wholly distinguishable — for

> I knew that it (my childhood) would not cease, just as the other stage was only now beginning. I said to myself that everyone was naturally at liberty to draw lines of demarcation between the two, but they were hypothetical. And it appeared that I was not clever enough to think out any for myself. Every time I tried, life gave me to understand that it knew nothing of them. If, however, I persisted in thinking that my childhood was past, then in that same moment my whole future also vanished and there was left me only just so much to stand on as a lead soldier has beneath his feet. (*Ibid.*, S. 234.)

Perhaps one might call the second the Book of Love.

There is a new problem in the world brought about by a change in women, who now —

> are on the verge of abandoning themselves and of thinking about themselves as men might speak of them when they are not present. That appears to them as progress. They are nearly convinced that life, if one did not stupidly waste it, consists in the search of one enjoyment and then another, and again another that is yet more keen. They have already begun to look about and search — they, whose strength has always lain in being found. (*Ibid.*, S. 160.)

Since women are neglecting this task it is time for men to take up the labor of love and to understand what it consists of — but how can men start, since they are incapable of helping each other? They cannot share their truths — one man understood this very well; it was the Marquis de Bellemare, who had lived in Persia, and whose story appears in the memoirs that the old Count Brahe dictates to Abelone

> . . . There were those who reproached him with believing in the past only when it was within himself. They could not understand that the whole thing has no meaning unless one has been born with it . . . he might easily have been able to live with a truth, this man, had he been by himself. But it was no trifle to live alone with a truth like his and he was not so lacking in taste as to invite others to come and visit him when he was in her company. She should not enter into the conversation. He was too oriental for that. 'Adieu, Madame,' he said to her sincerely, 'until another time.' . . . With that he went off and laid out his botanical park for the people, a kind of Jardin d'Acclimatation for the larger kind of lies which have never been seen in our latitudes, and a palm house of exaggeration and a small well-tended 'figuerie' for false secrets.[40]

But Malte is no more capable of that than he is of living like La Dame à la Licorne. His father's death emphasizes the fear that lies for him at the bottom of everything and it is out of this that he must reconstruct his life; that is the only thing he is sure of.

---

[40] . . . es gab natürlich genug, die ihm übelnahmen, dass er an die Vergangenheit nur glaubte, wenn sie in ihm war. Das konnten sie nicht begreifen, dass der Kram nur Sinn hat, wenn man damit geboren wird. . . . Er hätte gut mit einer Wahrheit leben können, dieser Mensch, wenn er allein gewesen wäre. Aber es war keine Kleinigkeit, allein zu sein mit einer solchen. Und er war nicht so geschmacklos, die Leute einzuladen, dass sie ihn bei seiner Wahrheit besuchten: die sollte nicht ins Gerede kommen: dazu war er viel zu sehr Orientale. 'Adieu, Madame,' sagte er ihr wahrheitsgemäss, 'auf ein anderes Mal.' . . . Damit ging er fort und legte draussen für die Leute seinen Tierpark an, eine Art Jardin d'Acclimatation für die grösseren Arten von Lügen, die man bei uns noch nie gesehen hatte, und ein Palmenhaus von Uebertreibungen und eine kleine, gepflegte Figuerie falscher Geheimnisse. (*Ibid.*, S. 180.)

> When I was a boy, they struck me in the face and told me I was a coward. That was because my fear was still unworthy. Since then, however, I have learned to be afraid with real fear — the fear that increases only when the power that creates it increases. We have no idea of this power except in our fear. For it is so utterly inconceivable, so totally opposed to us, that our brain disintegrates at the point where we strain to think of it. And yet for some time now I have believed that it is ours, this power, that it is all the power we have, only that it is still too great for us.[41]

Stories follow that form the most obscure part of the book — stories drawn from Malte's travels and from books he read in childhood, tales of mania, of lifelong disguise, of false aims. One finds oneself being absorbed in them for their own sake; yet it is obvious that each story is a part of the development of his theme, a symbol of Malte's spiritual progress; part of the fascination of the book lies in the joy one feels as each new connection becomes visible — it is the joy of personal discovery.

Rilke is never didactic because he is always talking to himself. It is only by knowing him well that we can begin to understand what he is saying. In this way it becomes clear that the several stories — of the man who tried to save time, of the false Czar and of Charles the Bold — are all parables of masculine madness seeking at gigantic cost to gain what it cannot enjoy. It would take much too long to try to analyze the variations of the madness. They are summed up in the strange story of the tin canister whose lid has the perverse habit of falling off and rolling on the floor, though it should have no other desire than to be on the canister — just so badly do human beings fit their occupations. Their chief thought is, as soon as they can, to jump down, roll around and make a tinny noise . . . In contrast to these, Malte remembers the June morning with Abelone in the arbor when she read aloud Bettina's letters to Goethe.

---

[41] Da ich ein Knabe war, schlugen sie mich ins Gesicht und sagten mir dass ich feige sei. Das war, weil ich mich noch schlecht fürchtete. Aber seitdem habe ich mich fürchten gelernt mit der wirklichen Furcht, die nur zunimmt, wenn die Kraft zunimmt, die sie erzeugt. Wir haben keine Vorstellung von dieser Kraft, ausser in unserer Furcht. Denn so ganz unbegreiflich ist sie, so völlig gegen uns, dass unser Gehirn sich zersetzt an der Stelle wo wir uns anstrengen, sie zu denken. Und dennoch seit einer Weile glaube ich, dass es unsere Kraft ist, alle unsere Kraft, die noch zu stark ist für uns. (*Ibid.*, S. 196.)

> I do not know what I understood of it, but it was as though a solemn promise had been given me that one day I should grasp it all. . . . The promise is still being fulfilled. . . . How is it possible that all men do not still speak of your love? . . . you yourself knew the worth of it; you uttered it aloud to your greatest poet that he might make it human, for as yet it was but elemental . . . The woman who loves always transcends the man she loves because life is greater than fate. (*Ibid.*, S. 239, 240, 241, 242.)

Then out of these memories he suddenly brings us back to the Paris he is living in and to the blind man's hat:

> An old high crowned, stiff felt hat, which he wore as all blind men wear their hats, without regard to the lines of their faces, failing to form by this accession to their personality any new and external unity.[42]

Malte is frightened by this man's misery and so avoids meeting him.

> My cowardly fear of looking at him so obsessed me that finally his image, often without cause, condensed with painful force,

---

[42] ein alter, hochgewölbter, steifer Filzhut, den er trug, wie alle Blinden ihre Hüte tragen: ohne Vezug zu den Zeilen des Gesichts, ohne die Möglichkeit, aus diesem Hinzukommenden und sich selbst eine neue äussere Einheit zu bilden. (*Ibid.*, S. 244.)

in me to such sharp misery that, driven by it, I resolved to intimidate and suppress the increasingly precise picture in my imagination by confronting it with the external reality. . . .
I knew at once that my conception of him was worthless. The utter abandonment of his misery, softened by no precaution or disguise, exceeded the powers of my imagination. I had grasped neither the angle of inclination in his attitude, nor the terror with which the inner side of his eyelids seemed constantly to fill him. I had never thought of his mouth, which was like the opening of a gutter . . .
I had stood still and while I saw all this almost simultaneously I felt that he was wearing another hat, and a cravat undoubtedly meant for Sunday use only. It had a pattern of oblique yellow and violet checks and as for the hat it was a new cheap straw hat with a green band. These colors were of course of no significance and it is petty for me to have remembered them. Let me only say that on him they were like the softest down on a bird's breast. He himself got no pleasure from them and who among all those people — I looked around about me — could imagine that all this finery was for him? . . . My God, it struck me then with sudden violence, thus then art Thou, . . . this then is to Thy liking — in this dost Thou take pleasure — that we should learn to endure and not to judge. What are the grievous things and what the gracious — Thou alone knowest.[43]

---

[43] In meiner Feigheit, nicht hinzusehen, brachte ich es so weit, dass das Bild dieses Mannes sich schliesslich oft auch ohne Anlass stark und schmerzhaft in mir zusammenzog zu so hartem Elend, dass ich mich, davon bedrängt, entschloss, die zunehmende Fertigkeit meiner Einbildung durch die auswärtige Tatsache einzuschüchtern und aufzuheben. Es war gegen Abend. Ich nahm mir vor, sofort aufmerksam an ihm vorbeizugehen. . . .

Ich wusste sofort, dass meine Vorstellung wertlos war. Die durch keine Vorsicht oder Verstellung eingeschränkte Hingebenheit seines Elends übertraf meine Mittel. Ich hatte weder den Neigungswinkel seiner Haltung begriffen gehabt, noch das Entsetzen, mit dem die Innenseite seiner Lider ihn fortwährend zu erfüllen schien. Ich hatte nie an seinem Mund gedacht, der eingezogen war wie die Oeffnung eines Ablaufs.

Ich war stehn geblieben, und während ich das alles fast gleichzeitig sah, fühlte ich, dass er einen anderen Hut hatte und eine ohne Zweifel sonntägliche Halsbinde: sie war schräg in gelben und violetten Vierecken gemustert, und was den Hut angeht, so

The next parables are of madness and kings, of misery that destroys the most august of masks. Misery, the only road to truth. As for the rest of us, the comfortable, the normal,

> we discover that we do not know our part. We look for a mirror. We want to rub off the paint, to remove all that is artificial and become real, but somewhere a bit of mummery that we forgot still sticks to us. A trace of exaggeration remains in our eyebrows; we do not notice that the corners of our lips are twisted. And thus we go about a laughing stock, a mere half thing; neither real beings nor actors.[44]

Only the very unhappy are entirely safe from this mummery. Lovers are safe only when they love without return, as Bettina, or Gaspara Stampa or Héloïse. To be loved in return is not the object, for love cannot be returned:

> We who have projected God can never finish. (*Ibid.*, S. 276.)

Malte meets Abelone for a last time in Venice and there, in a scene full of social artifice that stands alone in the book in order to give, by contrast, reality to all the other scenes, Abelone sings a song of this love.

---

war es ein billiger neuer Strohhut mit einem grünen Band. Es liegt natürlich nichts an diesen Farben, und es ist kleinlich, dass ich sie behalten habe. Ich will nur sagen, dass sie an ihm waren wie das Weicheste auf eines Vogels Unterseite. Er selbst hatte keine Lust daran, und wer von allen (ich sah mich um) durftemeinen, dieser Staat wäre um seinetwillen.

Mein Gott, fiel es mir mit Ungestüm ein, so bist du also. . . . Dieses ist dein Geschmack, hier hast du Wohlgefallen. Dass wir doch lernten, vor allem aushalten und nicht urteilen. Welche sind die schweren Dinge? Welche die gnädigen? Du allein weiss es. (*Ibid.*, S. 245, 246, 247.)

[44] Wir entdecken wohl, dass wir die Rolle nichtwissen, wir suchen einen Spiegel, wir möchten abschminken und das Falsche abnehmen und wirklich sein. Aber irgendwo haftet uns noch ein Stück Verkleidung an das wir vergessen. Eine Spur Uebertreibung bleibt in unseren Augenbrauen, wir merken nicht, dass unsere Mundwinkel verbogen sind. Und so gehen wir herum, ein Gespött und eine hälfte; weder Seinde, noch Schauspieler. (*Ibid.*, S. 269.)

The book ends with the parable of the Prodigal Son who left home to escape the affection of his family and who returned to it, not as they interpreted it, to ask forgiveness, but to implore them not to love him.

> For he recognizes more clearly from day to day that the love of which they were so vain, and to which they secretly encouraged one another, did not concern him. He had almost to smile at their endeavors, and it was evident how little they could be thinking about him.
> What did they know of him? He was now terribly difficult to love, and he felt that One alone was capable of loving him. But he was not yet willing. (*Ibid.*, S. 300.)

Are these last words a cry of despair? Rilke has reached the centre of his consciousness and found a great longing there that is the love of God. But who is this God? He has stripped him of those attributes of love and mercy that make Him accessible. He has removed Him not only out of Time and Space but out of human consciousness. He grants no communication with Him. After Abelone's song he had said

> I had sometimes wondered before that Abelone did not direct the fervor of her great passion towards God. I know that she longed to remove from love all that was transitory; but would her sincere heart be deceived on that score? Did she not know that God is only a direction given to love, not its object? Did she not know she need fear no return from Him? Did she not recognize the restraint of this deliberate lover, who quietly defers desire so that we, slow as we are, may bring our whole heart into play? Or did she seek to avoid Christ? Did she fear to be held by Him half-way, to become His Beloved? (*Ibid.*, S. 289.)

Is the God that Rilke loved merely his own creative life? His destiny as a poet was clearly the realization of his own talent. But was it his own hand that guided it? That was the isolation that seems here to reach the pitch of despair. The isolation of the artist with a work that has become to him a universe reflecting the one his sense perceives but independent of it. Faith, Hope, and Charity were turned inward and illumined only what he himself could do. But I think, as I have already said, that it is important not to take his philosophy as a thing entirely personal to him. Poets do not create a system of metaphysics. They only illuminate what they find already existing. Scholastic doctrine gave Dante his. The tower was already there; he only had to set lights to it. But Rilke found no construction acceptable to him. All he seemed able to use were the burrowings of nineteenth century doubt. Whatever belief he was given in childhood convinced him of the unreality of contemporary Christianity. It seemed to him only a reflection of the petty desires of unspiritual people. If much that he writes seems Christian, it is because he accepted, as we have seen, the beauty of poverty and solitude and suffering — the means by which men had arrived at reality.

It is a defect in Rilke that he began by trying to make what he found appear complete. His piety, as we see it in the *Book of Hours*, is a cloudy thing. And it is not such a cloud as could bring forth the hard stone tables of a law — when Rilke speaks as a prophet he is not convincing. The transformation he describes in Malte is his realization of this. The *Notebooks* are a definition of his own incapacity. He must remain an observer who can transform his observations into poetry and forget his longing for a divine communion; for God is not yet ready to love him and moreover he is also not yet ready to love God.

HESTER PICKMAN

(*To be concluded*)

FOUR PRELUDES

I

NOTHING to say, you say? Then we'll say nothing:
But step from rug to rug and hold our breaths,
Count the green ivy-strings against the window,
The pictures on the wall. Let us exchange
Pennies of gossip, news from nowhere, names
Held in despite or honor; we have seen
The weather-vanes veer westward, and the clouds
Obedient to the wind; have walked in snow;
Forgotten and remembered —
But we are strangers;
Came here by paths which never crossed; and stare
At the blind mystery of each to each.
You've seen the sea and mountains? taken ether?
And slept in hospitals from Rome to Cairo?
Why so have I; and lost my tonsils, too;
And drunk the waters of the absolute.
But is it this we meet for, of an evening,
Is it this —
O come, like Shelley,
For god's sake let us sit on honest ground
And tell harsh stories of the deaths of kings!
Have out our hearts, confess our blood,
Our foulness and our virtue! I have known
Such sunsets of despair as god himself
Might weep for of a Sunday; and then slept
As dreamlessly as Jesus in his tomb.
I have had time in one hand, space in the other,
And mixed them to no purpose. I have seen
More in a woman's eye than can be liked,
And less than can be known. And as for you —

O creature of the frost and sunlight, worm
Uplifted by the atom's joy, receiver
Of stolen goods, unconscious thief of god —
Tell me upon this sofa how you came
From darkness to this darkness, from what terror
You found this restless pause in terror, learned
The bitter light you follow. We will talk —

But it is time to go, and I must go;
And what we thought, and silenced, none shall know.

II

THE dead man spoke to me and turned a page
Wide as the world with stars upon its forehead,
And Genesis and Kings and Acts in gold,
And Chronicles and Numbers, and he said —
Slowly as in the lamplight turns my head,
Slowly as in the starlight turns the world,
So slowly comes the end.

And then he turned
Another page, — the moon was on its margin, —
Another, with a golden crab outstretched, —
A third with twins of granite, — and a fourth
Where Alpha was at war with Omega,
The word on fire; and there stood Socrates,
Disputing with a walnut for the world;
The pros and cons were hacked like arms and thighs;
The hewed words bled their vowels. Socrates
Perished for truth; the walnut throve and grew.
Where wisdom was, now grew a walnut grove.
Then Jesus sowed the dragon's teeth, and then
The dead man turned again —

And Jesus, dead,
Became the star-tree, became Igdrasil
That murdered all mankind with powerful roots;
Only the rock lived, and unblemished still
Smoothed its brow in the sun.

The dead man said —
More pages have I yet, more worlds to come.
Resist this little frost of evil! turn
To death more dreadful than the death of flesh.
Turn now, and drink time's poison, before time
Drink you; and learn the alphabet of change
Before the omega has come, and know
Leviathan himself; and be himself;
And rage, no larger than a leaf, against
The world that's smaller still —

Here is the page!
Here, look! the wing is written of that word
Not spoken yet, — o angel still unborn.
Come turn it, Thought! and see the splendor there, —
The emptiness that knowledge cannot dare.

III

RIMBAUD and Verlaine, precious pair of poets,
Genius in both (but what is genius?) playing
Chess on a marble table at an inn
With chestnut blossom falling in blond beer
And on their hair and between knight and bishop —
Sunlight squared before them on the chess-board
Cirrus in heaven, and a squeal of music
Blown from the leathern door of Ste. Sulpice —

Discussing, between moves, iamb and spondee
Anacoluthon and the open vowel
God the great peacock with his angel peacocks
And his dependent peacocks the bright stars:
Disputing too of fate as Plato loved it,
Or Sophocles, who hated and admired,
Or Socrates, who loved and was amused:

Verlaine puts down his pawn upon a leaf
And closes his long eyes, which are dishonest,
And says "Rimbaud, there is one thing to do:
We must take rhetoric, and wring its neck! . . ."
Rimbaud considers gravely, moves his Queen; —
And then removes himself to Timbuctoo.

And Verlaine dead, — with all his jades and mauves;
And Rimbaud dead in Marseilles with a vision,
His leg cut off, as once before his heart;
And all reported by a later lackey,
And his sole virtue tardiness in time.

Let us describe the evening as it is: —
The stars disposed in heaven as they are:
Verlaine and Shakspere rotting, where they rot,
Rimbaud remembered, and too soon forgot;

Order in all things, logic in the dark,
Arrangement, in the atom and the spark;
Time in the heart and sequence in the brain —

Such as destroyed Rimbaud, and fooled Verlaine.
And let us then take godhead by the neck —

And strangle it, and with it, rhetoric.

IV

STOOD, at the closed door, and remembered —
Hand on the doorpost faltered, and remembered —
The long ago, the far away, the near
With its absurdities — the calendar,
The one-eyed calendar upon the wall,
And time dispersed, and in a thousand ways,
Calendars torn, appointments made and kept,
Or made and broken, and the shoes worn out
Going and coming, street and stair and street,
Lamplight and starlight, fog and northeast wind,
St. Mary's ringing the angelus at six —

And it was there, at eight o'clock I saw
Vivien and the infinite, together,
And it was here I signed my name in pencil
Against the doorpost, and later saw the snow
Left by the messenger, and here were voices —
Come back later, do come back later, if you can,
And tell us what it was, tell us what you saw,
Put your heart on the table with your hand
And tell us all those secrets that are known
In the profound interstices of time —
The glee, the wickedness, the smirk, the sudden
Divine delight — do come back and tell us,
The clock has stopped, sunset is on the snow,
Midnight is far away, and morning farther —

And then the trains that cried at night, the ships
That mourned in fog, the days whose gift was rain,
June's daisy, and she loved me not, the skull
Brought from the tomb — and I was there, and saw

FOUR PRELUDES

The bright spade break the bone, the trumpet-vine
Bugled with bees, and on my knees I picked
One small white clover in the cactus shade,
Put it in water and took it to that room
Where blinds were drawn and all was still —

Neighbors, I have come
From a vast everything whose sum is nothing,
From a complexity whose speech is simple,
Here are my hands and heart, and I have brought
Nothing you do not know, and do not fear.
Here is the evening paper at your door —
Here are your letters, I have brought the tickets,
The hour is early, and the speech is late.
Come, we are gods, — let us discourse as gods;
And weigh the grain of sand with Socrates;
Before we fall to kissing, and to bed.

CONRAD AIKEN

THE ROUNDHOUSE

THE big bright accurate alarm clock clanged like a warning gong at a railroad crossing. It was five o'clock again, in the afternoon of a hot summer Sunday. Without really waking up, moving by habit in the hazy late light, Al rolled out, took a bath, and shaved.

When he was done, the backs of his lean hands were still gray, and his fingernails were outlined in blue. His eyelashes and his level eyebrows, high in his long, hollow face, still contained some fine particles of soot. And his face, in spite of the shaving and the gritty soap, remained the peculiar pale grayish-white of the roundhouse men who worked on the night shift.

He put on a white shirt and his good clothes, and went downstairs to breakfast. His mother had bought coffee-cake, cooked new apples from the farm, fried some eggs, and made coffee. Though she was an old country woman, and not used to living in town, she could see that this meal, coming about supper time, was really Al's breakfast. She was pleased that she could understand the situation, and always got him breakfast just before she got supper for her husband and herself.

But after a hearty breakfast Al had a whole evening to kill. He could walk uptown, find another union man, and play a game of pool. He could stay at home, spread his pencils on a table, and draw pictures of whatever came into his head. Sometimes he made cartoons of snoopy foremen, sometimes he designed luxurious roadsters with very long wheelbases, at other times he tried to draw curly-haired little hussies that he had seen on the street; he never succeeded with anything except the automobiles. Or he could listen to the radio or play his phonograph.

When he thought of walking six blocks uptown, he felt dead tired. He was too listless even to sharpen a pencil to draw with. He was tired all the time. Though his family told him that he was in the prime of life and ought to be feeling fine, he did not have steam enough to do anything besides work and sleep. Yet he could not sleep well. He had never grown used to sleeping in the daytime. In the evening, when he got up, his eyeballs ached, his throat was sore, his joints cracked, and he felt as though he had never slept at all.

He sat on the back porch until after supper and after sundown. In his father's little garden the thick green tomato vines turned greenish black; through the alley the neighbor's cat stole along looking straight ahead; here and there in the twilight some children were calling to one another, very clearly; the hot air became still and damp; and presently over the garden a few lightning-bugs began to appear, gleaming at intervals in unexpected places, like tiny flashes of heat lightning, just as the lightning-bugs used to appear in the country, glimmering over the low misty hayfields and the pastures, and in the dark leafy tunnels in the cornfields.

At last he dragged into the house, into the bright empty living room, and wound up his phonograph. It was an old Edison machine that played cylindrical records, and the records were old, too. He put on a German piece and sat in a hard rocker beside the machine to listen. The needle crackled through the blank grooves, and then from the fluted cabinet, from the concealed horn, from Berlin or some American laboratory, came a slow stately violin-and-bell beginning of *The Blue Danube Waltz*, and as the waltz proceeded calmly and proudly, Al stared without seeing at the ugly brown wall-paper before him, sat motionless, his face like gray cast iron, listening, not thinking, not remembering. He heard the notes of the music, and the hum of the wheels and the governor, the scratching of the sapphire needle.

The little machine, one of Edison's greatest inventions, a triumph of progress, ground on steadily. But only at ten, when the whistle of the eastbound express sounded from the other side of town, did Al begin to wake up. His eyes brightened, and with workmanlike movements he stowed the phonograph and the records away in a corner. He went upstairs and changed into his work clothes, a black shirt, greasy overalls and jacket, heavy shoes, an engineer's cap, a blue handkerchief around his neck to keep the cinders from going down. When he appeared in the bright living room again, a man tall, swarthy, oily black, rectangular, indifferent but able, mindless but cunning, he strode through all ready for work, his heart and lungs idling, his long arms waiting to reach out, up, down.

He took his dinner pail, left home, and walked up the track of another railroad toward the roundhouse. He passed dark quiet cottages, the depot with one light in the ticket office, a silent lumberyard, and the gas tanks that supplied the town. Then, for a few hundred yards, the track ran on a high embankment between grass and truck gardens. For a few minutes he walked through something like the country again. Below in the darkness, in the sweet-corn that he would see on his return in the morning, the long rank leaves, stirred by a faint wind, rustled against one another softly and mysteriously, so penetratingly that anyone passing could not help wondering what they were saying, why they were whispering.

At the crossing he turned west and following a path on the hot gravel between the tracks, steadily approached the slate-colored roundhouse, which looked something like a prairie coal mine or a distant view of Chicago. Ahead of him at different points burned the red, green, and yellow signals of the semaphores; at the roundhouse the floodlights shone on the tops of box-cars, the dead locomotives, the maze of clear tracks, a small black mark that was a workman; in the yard a switch engine butted box-cars this way and that, making up a freight train, meanwhile blowing off steam in a woolly cloud. He could hear dully, could feel, the dynamos spinning in the invisible powerhouse, and the beating of the horizontal slow-speed engines there. And from the starry sky the scattered smoke was already falling in a rain of soot and fine cinders.

He hurried on between two sidings of freight-cars, a dim stifling alley, and soon reached a corner of the roundhouse, where some stunted burdocks were growing up among a pile of car wheels. He went to the once whitewashed locker room, spoke to the time clerk just before twelve, got a pair of gloves, locked up the dinner pail, and went out in front of the hissing roundhouse to see what there was to do. The turntable was empty, and so were the tracks radiating from it to the stalls, a semicircle of twenty open doors. The high dazzling blue-white floodlights, which defined even the threads of the bolts in the rails, seemed to be lighting up a deserted yard. But in the gigantic stalls the engines stood back-end out, like circus elephants at supper, patient and important; and steam escaped continuously, tools clanked and tapped, and under the drop-lights scurried the blackened half-naked mechanics and their helpers, cleaning, inspecting, and repairing the engines for the next run.

Al was a hostler's helper. He had only one thing to do. When a hostler took a clean engine out to a train crew that was going to make a run, Al went along from the roundhouse to a standpipe and the coal station and saw that the tender was filled with water and coal. In winter he saw that the engine's sandboxes were filled. Sometimes he brought a dirty engine back through the yard to the ashpits or the roundhouse. If there was no engine to go out, he sat around and waited for one. At such times, especially in rainy and cold weather, he waited at the little shed at the center of the hundred-foot turntable. In the shed, which was the size, the shape, and the odor of an outhouse, there were an electric light on a cord, a stove, the control box of the turntable, and the old operator. On warm nights Al and the old man sat on a shelf-like bench in front of the shed as comfortably as they could. One of them watched for the outbound engines and the other for the inbound engines.

Al went out to the bench again and sat down by the old man. The night was hot, still, and gaseous, and in a distant bunk-car a Mexican section hand who could not sleep was playing a guitar and singing sadly of love. And this alien song, drifting into the yard after midnight, coming in between the clank of tools and through the perpetual escape of steam, made the floodlights bring out the track on the turntable more sharply than usual, every speck of new fallen soot on the worn bright rails, the cedar ties as black as if charred. The old man said, "How are ye this evenin'," and went on chewing. He was small and wizened, with a grizzly beard; and his clothes, his flat cap, his grimy jacket and overalls, seemed to have shrunk along with him. A few years ago he had always been ready to talk about himself or the railroad, but now he was not. And in some way, either from his short remarks, or from the gossip that circulated mysteriously and quickly through the yard, Al had heard why the old man had become so silent. There were two reasons. He had been demoted, because of his age, from hostler to turntable operator. He had never been anything more than a hostler, but that position had satisfied him, and he had taken the loss of it pretty hard. Then, just as he was recovering, and saying philosophically that we all got to give in a little bit sometime, his youngest daughter, a lively girl of sixteen, had gone out with a passing Army man, during the War, and presently had had a squalling little soldier in the house. After that event the old man had looked glum for a long time, and he did not talk very much any more. And where once he was always trying to give away a chew of his special plug, a mixture of cheap tobacco and dried peaches, tough as shoe leather, tasting first like peaches and then like fire, now he seldom offered it to anyone, but took a chew himself, wrapped the plug up again in a clean handkerchief, and, all hunched over, looked at the flashing rails in front of him until he heard an engine coming.

Before long one came. A bell rang in the roundhouse and a freight engine backed slowly out toward the turntable. The old man, jerking the lever on the control box, set the long table turning around in its pit to join the right track. Al walked along the table and with his gloved hand signalled the hostler. The engine rolled onto the table. "Track Five," said the hostler, leaning out of the cab, and Al shouted at the old man, "Track Five." The table turned and stopped at the track, and as the engine rolled forward toward town, Al grabbed a handhold and swung on.

He rode the fireman's seat as far as the standpipe and then clambered up over the tender to the water tank at the rear. The engine stopped with the tank under the projecting spout of the standpipe. Standing on his toes, Al reached up and pulled down the big eighteen-inch iron spout, pulling against the counterweights, and shoved it into the hole in the tank. He opened a valve and the water poured down. In a few minutes the five-thousand-gallon tank was full and the water was rushing over his shoes, all over the rounded deck, making it slippery. Closing the valve, he flung the spout upward. The engine was already going on toward the coal station, a high black block-like building.

It stood a hundred feet away, and inefficiently slowed up the fueling. A minute later the engine stopped with the tender under a wooden chute. Pulling at the short counterweighted chute, as he had pulled at the water spout, struggling with the wide cumbersome thing, Al brought it down and fastened it to the tender. Then he crawled up on a side of the fixed chute and raised a gate that dammed back the coal. The heavy chunks slid down into the iron tender with a banging rumble. From them rose a cloud of coal dust that blackened him quickly, grew muddy in his sweat, came in with his breath and coated his nose passages, his throat, and his lungs. The dust from ten tons of coal rose past him, and then the chunks were falling off onto the ground, where a critical office man would see them in the morning. Al stood on the gate, jumped on it, and forced it shut. Then he slid down the chute, pushed it up, and scrambled off the back of the moving tender.

Running eastward, the freight engine passed the caboose of its train, lighted up the cars ahead, box-cars, flat-cars, cattle-cars, tank-cars, and gondolas, gray, grimy red or yellow, Rock Island, Southern Pacific, Standard Oil, and Lehigh Valley, and at a distance became small passing smaller cars, until it stopped at the front end of the line, near the station, almost a mile away. And there, behind blinding white headlights, a clean locomotive was replacing the dirty one on the westbound express, a crack Chicago-Denver train, during the short stop. Al turned back toward the roundhouse. Over the ashpits a recently arrived engine was standing, having the fire and clinkers knocked out of its firebox. Niggers dressed to the ears to keep the heat off banged away with long pokers and called to each other drunkenly.

Before he had reached the turntable, the fresh express locomotive, hurling up sparks like skyrockets, hauling its string of pullman cars as if they were nothing, roared west on the main line, on the two-hundred-mile run to Omaha. The exhausts went crash crash crash, the piston-rod shot in and out, the great drivers with new gray rims whirled onward, the yard shook and smoked with dust uneasily rising. And then the racing windows of the pullman cars sped by all dark, for hundreds of passengers were trying to sleep, while only in the last car, the palatial observation car, the lights and the giltwork shone, business men in cool expensive suits sat smoking cigars, and girls in white and immodest frocks leaned back in armchairs languidly.

The crack train passed, and through the rising dust, over a siding of dim freight-cars, Al saw that in the southwest the sky was glowing and quivering with continual flashes of heat lightning. It played there weirdly, now bright, now faint, and at moments outlined the sullen rectangular shape of a boxcar. In just that way, on a summer night in the country, the heat lightning had outlined at the horizon the distant round leafy groves, illuminating them greenly and wonderfully, so that when he was a boy he had stayed up late alone to watch them. He had walked, cool and clean, the soles of his feet pressing the soft earth, down the dark lane between two fields of hay, which smelled ripe.

But now the early morning, the two o'clock rush, had begun. Behind the floodlights, on the roof of the roundhouse, dense coal smoke crowded out of the semicircle of smokejacks, coming from the engines down below. From the enormous doors three clean engines backed out toward the turntable. They closed in, their wheels still slowly backed, they waited, hissing. The long turntable lumbered back and forth in its circular pit. The old operator, peering out of the dull windows of his shed, monkey-like, chewing ferociously, yanked the worn control lever this way and that, became dizzy, sweat till he stank. The hostlers' helpers, Al among them, trotted in from different directions, ran around the pit to get to the engines. Nearing them, the helpers paused to signal, and their blackened and glistening faces shrank smaller than a space between four rivets in the double rows of rivets in the tenders' high steel sides. Out at the ashpits, meanwhile, the dirty engines were tied up on the inbound tracks. Hot as furnaces, reeking of burnt oil and coal, deserted by everyone, they waited in line to have their fires and clinkers knocked out. The first engines in sagged the rails over the pits, and the drunk niggers there, scorched by the heat, cursed by the gang boss, yelled and pounded the redhot fireboxes furiously. In the power plant back of the roundhouse the night foreman strolled to a wall of shining dials and studied them; a young man, pale but strong, a hostler risen from the ranks, overbearing yet with a knack of licking the right boots, he throve on hard work, low pay, even on coal gas; meeting Al in the yard, he would say, first looking around to see that other men were not listening, though in the racket of iron and steam no one could have overheard, "You need to be more ambitious, like myself." Now he spoke to a bald mechanic, an old railroad man, who obediently started up an idle horizontal engine, which had been polished till it glittered. The engine started softly, pulling a new dynamo, coal fed automatically into the fireboxes of the boilers, from the row of powerhouse chimneys smoke fell in a grim sulphurous fog, more electric current flowed to the motors in the railroad well. Instantly the reserve pumps there, lifting and thumping, began to pour more water into the main supply tank, to try to build up the pressure in the standpipes, up inch by inch, for the outbound engines were drinking the well dry. And now a huge two-hundred-ton one-thousand-horsepower locomotive, coming out ponderously, delicately, its steam singing, its linked drivers revolving slowly together, its white and black paint all fresh, its rods wiped bright, its massive bearings dripping clean oil, for the early Denver-Chicago express, backed haughtily toward the turntable, and Al had to run to watch the table and see that its rails made a joint with the track. Now he climbed up on the monstrous tender, which was twice as high and long as the last one; pulled down the iron spout of a standpipe again; fought with a coal chute that was too heavy for him; panting, breathed in the dust being ground by the tumbling coal; dropped off the rear end of the tender as it departed. And as the locomotive rolled away toward town, running quickly under the green signals, to wait for the Denver-Chicago express that now far in the west, in the sultry night, on the smooth solid double-track road, was approaching the Chicago-Denver express and soon would pass it with a flash and a roar, Al turned back, coughed and spat black spit, and jogged along in the loose cinders toward the glare of the roundhouse, where because new engines were firing up, the smoke fell past the lurid floodlights more and more darkly.

John Kemmerer

THE WINTER PALACE

MY winter palace, parting windy heaven
baffles the gales. All night they rush away.
Within, by a wildfire cedar-lit,
my fine green villains clasp their violins.
Who could have thought that e're their crystal eyes
fixed on Vivaldi's lucid score
they, fixing once upon my enemies,
had lighted with their glare those shrinking children?

Children, his shaggy hair fell over his eyes
when you were laid in hole of the deep mould;
but there were hyacinths where you were laid;
So much I saw. Then stones rolled, and the mattock
made the place neat.

I did not see my brother after that;
he never came to stay at Thule again.
When I was young I used to ask my mother
"What time will he come in? When O what time?"
"He's in the street. He's lonely nowadays,"
my mother would reply.

The little Princes, mingled in the grave,
shot up a chill, I thought at times, if shivering.
But when on festal nights my stair-hung palace
fed the dark counts who went the winter-journey
there was no lack of brilliant light. Our music
rose. There was winding of the forest-horn,
and troubles, all that troop with music, raught us.

THE WINTER PALACE

Whither they went . . . Whither I go . . . Whither . . .
Who's that?
Who spoke?
Who's in the gallery
in the many-mirrored shadows sinister?
— only the echo of a closing door,
a shutter stirred, a curtain lived and died.
The King of Ys, who spent the afternoon
waiting about this gallery (lacquered heels
shot elongated dark along the floor
from where the Mad King tottered by a window)
swore that he heard the sea-waves wash below.

But we are inland far: the dreary steppe
takes the grey snow as far as eye can see.
Sooner will this cold floor admit the leaves
of an aspiring flower than the wash
flow, ebb and flow about my palace foot.

and yet . . .
I dare not go to the window and look out
for fear that I should see some sorrowful tide
rising around my palace: and I fear
(you will not think me foolish) I may find
strange wreckage there. Some who loved less than I,
men of the world, encountering on the shore
Death's weary changelings, have raised up a head
and found a lonely brother staring drear.

Eric Schroeder

GEORGE KELLY AND DRAMATIC DEVICE

IT is of great importance in literature, or any other art, when one can correctly say of a piece, the materials are excellent, the form is not adequate. A piece which can be thus praised and condemned on perfectly explicit grounds has an importance exceeded only by the successful application of the criticism in a later work. For if the criticism can be made telling enough and forceful enough, the result should be the development of an interest in new forms or the rediscovery of older forms. The history of modern painting, for example, from David to Picasso, is a history of applicable criticisms of form and style; and, as demonstrated in modern painting, the style in turn becomes a critique of subject matter. George Kelly's play *Behold, The Bridegroom* has precisely the importance of a drama whose theme is splendid and whose style is inadequate to the theme.

Kelly's previous work has the merit of excellent craftsmanship. *The Torch Bearers*, his first long play, is a unique farce in which the elements of satire on the little theatre movement, and of slapstick, are never labored and never unsuccessful. *The Show Off* is a realistic American comedy and a better play than the former; but only because the medium is more difficult.

The much-admired ability of Kelly to catch the flavor of ordinary speech and the manners of commonplace characters makes *Daisy Mayme* a play difficult to compare with others. I am at a loss to find other comparison, for its comic manner, than to the comedies of Tchekov or to George M. Cohan's *The Hometowners*.

Craig's Wife was produced before *Daisy Mayme* and after *The Show Off*. It was Kelly's first venture into serious drama. According to the prevailing mode he wrote a problem-play. The result managed to be more than a problem-play, owing chiefly to the character of Mrs. Craig. Then came *Behold, The Bridegroom*, another serious play, but in no sense a problem play.

There are very few plays written in the last ten years — I know of none, to be exact — which, if only half-way serious, are not concerned with problems. Even the social drama of the early part of the century, though it found itself hampered by photographic technique and resorted to the even more confining style of symbolism, continued to exploit social conflict and arrangements.[1] The best example of the kind, in this country, was Eugene O'Neil's *Hairy Ape*. *Behold, The Bridegroom* continues neither the tradition of symbolism nor of social conflicts and habits. The importance of Kelly's play lies in a divergence from the tradition. The divergence brings on the question of style.

A problem-play is the dramatic exploitation of what is merely a social situation. *Ghosts* by Ibsen is a problem-play; *Antigone* by Sophocles is not. Yet *Antigone* is to some extent concerned with taboos within a society. But not "merely" with taboos. The magnificence of the character and the style lift it clear. A problem-play has its beginning and end in a social situation; the characters are of secondary import. The theme of *Behold, The Bridegroom* puts it on a level with *Antigone*. The style unfortunately keeps it far below that level. For it is the style of Kelly's play which prevents the chief character, Antoinette Lyle, from attaining magnificence, just as the style of Sophocles perfectly presents the character of *Antigone.*

---

[1] Symbolism in social drama, in truth, was not a change, but the logical development of a process of abstraction which the problem-play, in subject-matter, began. Had the change been a thorough-going one, there would have been a change of emphasis in the subject-matter. For a change in style requires a difference of emphasis in subject-matter; in the same way, a change in subject-matter requires a different style.

Behold, The Bridegroom is remarkable in several ways. The theme itself, the simple representation of an overpowering emotion and its consequences, not only makes the play a strange one among other American plays, it could have brought the play considerably close to an ideal of dramatic excellence. The play could have been performed, with a minimum of properties, on a bare stage. An ideal of dramatic excellence, that is, for anyone interested in a play and not in scenic effects. And any drama worth its salt could be given on a bare stage. But above these interesting qualities, there is the demand of the theme for a style to completely express and carry it.

A woman, about twenty-nine or thirty years old, has supposedly burnt herself out in various love affairs of no great moment. She meets a man, whose, perhaps, over-righteous character is a condemnation of her mode of life. She falls in love with him, for the first time. The man is scarcely aware, save reprovingly, of the woman's existence. She is overwhelmed by her love for him and simultaneously, by a feeling of utter worthlessness. The play follows the disintegration of a life suddenly presented with a meaning and a purpose, thwarted by its own cold judgment. Her disgust with herself and the tremendous urge of her love cause her to put aside a former lover, and by this act, to drive him to suicide. Her nature succumbs to the strain. Even when the man himself is moved by her love, there is no help for her. Her death ends the play.

On the face of it, and without detail, the story may be thought tenuous and cerebral, perhaps more the subject for a short novel, like *A Lost Lady*, than a play. But the thought will not find confirmation. The story has been, at least twice, successfully dramatized: once by Euripides in *Hippolytus* and again by Racine in *Phèdre*. The fault then is certainly not with the material, nor even with the version Kelly has used. In fact, under his hand, the Phaedra-Hippolytus theme has become extremely simplified, and if anything else, more intensely tragic; for the burden of it is carried almost entirely by Kelly's heroine, Miss Lyle. The fault of *Behold, The Bridegroom* lies completely in the style.

The simplification of the theme and the centering of the tragedy in the heroine make clear the inadequacies of the form of the play. As Kelly seems to have conceived Miss Lyle, and as she is dimly presented, Antoinette Lyle has heroic proportions. And the destruction of an heroic character is tragedy.

The heroine of *Behold, The Bridegroom* is not heroic by virtue of loving a man she cannot have, for one reason or another. If heroism consisted in frustration, no matter what the object, then every disappointed spinster would, of necessity, be heroic. The failure of a child to get the moon would be tragic. The order of nature which might be viewed as a process of change, leaving one thing standing and another fallen, would be tragic and every event heroic. But passivity, simple frustration, and the ignorance innocence has, are not tragic nor heroic, though often pathetic. Knowledge of evil, not the simple capacity for suffering, is the motivating force of tragedy. This knowledge is a knowledge of inescapable evil which impels or impedes the action of the character. The knowledge that Phèdre, in Racine's play, has, when she says to Hippolyte:

"J'ay voulu te paroistre odieuse, inhumaine;
Pour mieux te résister, j'ai recherché ta haine.
De quoy m'ont profité mes inutiles soins?
Tu me haïssois plus, je ne t'amois pas moins."[2]

Unlike the Phaedra of either Euripides or Racine, there is no shame in the mere fact that Antoinette Lyle loves. There is no Theseus to betray, no blood relation to violate. The evil in Miss Lyle's life is the fruitless passion of her past. The past by itself might have induced nothing more than ennui. The highest and most serious act of her character, her love for Spencer Train, reveals the past as it must seem to one she would have love her. Yet he must remain as she loves him. Her character is already determined in his eyes and her own. The unworthy acts can no more be renounced than the love itself. And the cry of Phèdre to Hippolyte, "Je m'abhorre encor plus que tu ne me déteste" is the judgment Antoinette Lyle renders on herself.

Precisely, then, in this judgment is the heroic character revealed. For the recognition of one object as good, another as evil, in situations where the whole person is required and neither object can be wished away, is the act of an heroic character. The will is set toward the good object, however impossible of attainment or whatever violence the will suffers; if the will is defeated, the result is tragedy.

Antoinette Lyle is an heroic character and *Behold, The Bridegroom* a tragedy more intense than its predecessors. The principal effect of the play is the destruction of the heroine; and once the action has begun, there is no departure from the path set; there is no deceit, there is no accident. If deceit were anywhere in the play, the scope of the tragedy, as in the version Racine and Euripides used, would be wider but no more intense.

---

[2] There are other kinds of tragedy: the mighty whose fall, by their height, is awe-inspiring; the fatal blind mistakes of worthy individuals, to cite only two. Pathos, likewise, undoubtedly has a place in a drama, and can be very moving. But these are not directly in line with the discussion.

It appears to me evident that the date in history in no wise affects the successful depiction of a character like Miss Lyle. Seriousness is not a quality belonging to an epoch, but to an individual. Heroic persons do not depend for their existence upon the belief in one set of gods rather than another. The gods are those to whom they lift their eyes, as the authors of their being, and say "That this must be!" And after, the facts remain unaltered. If today, those gods, whom Phèdre accuses of

"se sont fait une gloire cruelle
De séduire le coeur d'une foible mortelle,"

are Freudian psychologies or the deterministic course of nature, good and evil remain significant categories of human experience, however shifting the objects within experience. Upon the significance of those categories depends the nature of heroic and noble characters.

There is a limitation to the truth of what has just been said. The limitation is: heroic characters are found, almost always, within a drama, and not in personal experience. If our knowledge of natural events were as complete as our knowledge of dramatic characters and the consequences of their acts, we might have experience of heroic characters in every day contact. The illusion of complete knowledge of consequences on the part of the spectators, is the condition of the effectiveness of a play; the finality of the events set in motion by the action of the play is the requisite of a good play. There is undoubtedly some truth in the thought that a drama realizes the potentialities for heroism in a natural order; but, by the illusion of completeness the character's acts have a definiteness and an exclusiveness in drama, nowhere exemplified in the world of sensations. Distractions and minor reliefs might in the actual world minimize the desire of a Phaedra or an Antoinette Lyle; but the economy of the drama whose principal end is to give pleasure, in varying degrees, cannot admit accidental conditions. The determinism the drama imposes on itself, of a closed system, intensifies the conflict ending finally in the will of the characters, between a bonded desire and a knowledge of evil. The conflict creates heroic action and tragic characters in drama.

The drama of heroic characters whose actions lead to tragedy requires an heroic style. If Dryden's statement is accepted as true, that "every alternation or crossing of a design, every new sprung passion or turn of it, is part of the action, and much the noblest, unless we conceive nothing to be action till they come to blows," then in *Behold, The Bridegroom* we have a maximum of noble action and a minimum of blow-striking. The emotions of Miss Lyle are even violent, sufficiently violent, anyway, to destroy her. And this violence should be the prevailing mood of the play. The mood should communicate itself to the spectator. But the violence has no means of expression and the mood, consequently the play, remains turgid.

Violence may seem an unjustified word, because we are constantly confusing blow-striking and noble action, gun-firing and internal catastrophes. *Behold, The Bridegroom*, in spite of the apparent tenuousness of the theme, is not at all a drama of incompetence or world-weariness like *The Cherry Orchard*. There should be about it no air of half-finished sentences, or preoccupation with simple doings that establishes a mood of lingering sadness. Antoinette Lyle's world was afire and all the tears of heaven could not drown it. The kind of violence meant is the violence of damnation, the sudden revelation of a tragic order of events. Some mode should have been found to completely express it.

Excellent verse has been, traditionally, the best vehicle for such catastrophe and remains so. When Othello's jealousy drove him to murder Desdemona, he could say, after kissing her:

"One more, one more.
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee
And love thee after. One more, and that's the last;
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep
But these are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love."

No matter how badly an actor may recite those lines, they are the complete analogue to Othello's emotions, so that the event which is preparing and the doer's thoughts as he looks on may find complete expression. A drama must, to be successful, get beyond the footlights and convince and satisfy the spectator. Eugene O'Neil had, apparently, an inkling of the need for full expression of situations and of the failure of the ordinary exchanges of prose dialogues. His use of asides in *Strange Interlude* indicates as much. His method was, to my eye at least, a failure; it was a half-hearted compromise with naturalism. The need for a method of expression which will seem not mere comment nor description nor even direct communication is not satisfied by prose asides. There should be a means of comprising the springs of action in the characters, the press of the occasion, the subterfuges, the explanations, the decisions, the reluctances, sudden flashes of understanding, the charge of emotion that has brought about the scene. These, all that is ultimate and immediate in both characters and events, can be comprised only in excellent dramatic verse.

Every moment of a play in which the action is tragic and violent, indiscriminate of the content, does not necessarily require verse; not even the larger portions of moments. The dramatist as an artist will have to judge for himself of the proportions of prose and verse. But the moments of high seriousness and high action, moments holding the play in solution, need verse for their complete success. The reason is: the emotion in those moments should never reach the audience in an indefinite state, unless they are supposed to be indefinite. They should be clear to the audience and as burning as they are to the individual.

For example, at the close of the first act of *Behold, The Bridegroom*, the stage directions read: "He continues, rather reluctantly, across and up to the left door. And she remains perfectly still over at the divan, looking straight out. He climbs the three steps leading up to the door, then turns again, with a slightly troubled expression, and looks back at her. And there is a physical stillness. Then he turns away slowly and goes down the hallway. She waits quietly for a moment, then gradually lets her eyes follow his pathway, — along the floor; and presently she moves in a dream to the middle of the room, her eyes still fastened on the door. At the middle of the room she stops, and beholds the mystery. The curtain commences to descend slowly. And she wanders toward the left door."

It is quite effective, and profited much by Judith Anderson's performance, when the play was produced. But it is only halfway effective; the means of expression are lacking, no matter how good the actress is. The audience is uncertain of exactly what has happened. There is no need to keep them in doubt. Miss Lyle knows well, and not vaguely, as the audience does. Her uncertainty is one only of wonder. But Miss

Lyle's feelings and thoughts, at this point in the play, are the motivating force of the play. They should be clear and definite. And verse is such an ample medium that it could contain the wonder as a suggestion and the knowledge as a fact.

The verse Miss Lyle should have spoken need not have been loudly declamatory. Verse can be amazingly quiet, in the mode Shirley has in:

"Let me look upon my sister now,
Still she retains her beauty.
Death has been kind to leave her all this sweetness.
Thus in a morning have I oft saluted
My sister in her chamber; sat upon
Her bed and talked of many a harmless passage
But now 'tis night and a long night with her;
I shall never see these curtains drawn again
Until we meet in heaven."

There is nothing in this to offend the modern ear. The stage has been long occupied with plots which, if serious and good, are closer to autumnal sadness than to direct consuming emotions. The result has been that a playwright who attempts a theme requiring his characters' emotions to have something heroic about them, has been compelled to lessen them for production by writing in ordinary prose. The fashion does not have to be permanent.

F. L. Lucas, in his excellent book on tragedy,[3] has an argument to the contrary and says, "even if good dramatic blank verse could be written, it would tend to produce the wrong effect and the wrong atmosphere. It has too much of a past, too many memories that cast a sort of glamour of unreality and remoteness over its content — There may, perhaps, be no real reason why it should not be as minutely truthful to the psychology of real life as we now require, but it would not seem so. If blank verse is good, it seems mock-Elizabethan; and if it is bad, it is frightful."

---

[3] *Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle's Poetics*, by F. L. Lucas. Hogarth Press, 1927.

Against bad dramatic verse, there is no argument too strong. It is not, however, possible to know whether "good dramatic blank verse" would tend to produce "the wrong effect"; there are no examples of it. Yet there is some truth in the conviction that the experience a play-goer does have in listening to older plays in verse is not an experience of good or bad verse, but of bad acting. Lucas says somewhat previous to the passage quoted that blank verse is the only verse that comes nearest to prose "without becoming prose." One has only to listen to, say, Walter Hampden, to realize there is no such likeness to prose in the verse he is speaking. Bad actors are given to retailing the beat of the line to the audience as if they were paying out links in a chain. It is no wonder that all dramatic verse seems unreal and unnatural: we are made too conscious of its presence and not enough of its intentions. Dramatic verse is not an end in itself, it is a vehicle of dramatic movement. If the dramatic verse is good, and is subserved to the proper end, the action of the play, the verse will have the desired effect: an intense realization on the part of the spectator of what is happening, what has happened and what will happen, so multitudinously and so deeply. If the verse is bad, then it has failed. But on the last ground verse is not disqualified as a mode of expression.

To speak of "too much of the past, too many memories" would invalidate any traditional form. Lucas appears to have forgotten that there are styles of verse within the forms of verse; and to take over blank verse does not mean a necessary relapse to the mannerisms of the Elizabethans. Besides, I do not see why dramatic verse needs to be confined to strict iambic pentameter. The period of experiment in verse and the war against traditional forms seems about over; and, while the various movements may have brought nothing of intrinsic worth out of themselves, they have demonstrated that the traditional forms are not necessarily inevitable, nor even the best. Why such experience could not be profited by within the traditional forms of dramatic verse is certainly not immediately evident. Blank verse itself, it should be recalled, is kept by custom only to one metrical scheme.

All tragedy does not, of course, need verse to sustain its high argument. *The Wild Duck* is the example that comes most easily to hand. *The Wild Duck*, however, is highly complicated; there is more action of the blow-striking variety; the characters have more externality; there are more figures to enlarge the pattern. *The Wild Duck* can stand prose; it even needs the deflation prose can give. Ibsen's play moves inevitably, but in circles, to its end. *Behold, The Bridegroom* is simple and direct, the action almost entirely internal. Internal action needs expression, tempestuous expression; in the phrase of Aristotle, it should "clear and not mean."

Prose dialogue, the ordinary conversation of our day, is niggardly or merely flashy. Whatever of it is most expressive becomes, at once, cliché. Further, it takes a tremendous amount of prose to explain, in full clarity, an emotional event that verse, by its hidden spring, can reveal instantly and richly.

The means whereby verse may achieve the release of event and thought in expression are various. Verse is not confined to the monotonous rhythms of prose; the subjection of the thought to metre and definite rhythm makes for greater intensity and exaltation; the finality of phrasing, which in prose is captured best only in the epigram or witty saying or the balanced sentence, is the common characteristic of all good verse.

Prose, unlike poetry, which attempts to capture within itself the play of emotions will be either heavy, beautiful and sad, or banal. If blank verse can be said to be nearest prose, without actually being such, then, truthfully, prose which is none of these things is always nearest to poetry. For evidence of this, it is necessary only to look at the last speech of Deirdre in Synge's play, which F. L. Lucas quotes as an example of the success of prose over poetry.

> "Draw a little back with the squabblings of fools when I am broken up with misery. I see the flames of Emain starting upward in the dark night; and because of me there will be weasels and wild cats crying on a lonely wall where there were queens and armies and red gold, the way there will be a story told of a ruined city and a raving king and a woman will be young forever. I see the trees naked and bare, and the moon shining. Little moon, little moon of Alban; it's lonesome you'll be this night, and tomorrow night, and long nights after, and you pacing the woods beyond Glen Lovi, looking every place for Deirdre and Naisi, the two lovers who slept so sweetly with each other. . . .
>
> "I have put away sorrow like an old shoe that is worn and muddy, for it is I have lost a life that will be envied by great companies. It was not by a low birth I made kings uneasy, and they sitting in the hall of Emain. It was not a low thing to be slain by Conchubor, who was wise, and Naisi had no match for bravery. It is not a small thing to be rid of grey hairs and the loosening of the teeth. It was the choice of lives we had in the clear wood, and in the grave, we're safe surely. . . .
>
> "I have a little key to unlock the prison of Naisi you'd shut up on his youth forever. Keep back, Conchubor, for the High King who is your master has put his hands between us. It was sorrows were foretold, but great joys were my share always; yet it is a cold place I must go to be with you, Naisi; and it's cold your arms will be this night that were warm about my neck so often. . . . It's a

pitiful thing to be talking out when your ears are shut to me. It's a pitiful thing, Conchubor, you have done this night in Emain; yet a thing will be a joy and a triumph to the ends of life and time. (She presses the knife into heart.)"

The major characteristics of the speech, to me, are its "poetic" characteristics. The choice of words, "little moon," "little key," "lonely wall"; the inversions, "it's lonesome you'll be"; the pattern of the rhythm, "two lovers who slept so sweetly together," — all are to me poetic. The appeal of these qualities is to poetic associations. The major effect is one of nostalgia, of things far away and long ago, the pathos, indeed, of *Tears, Idle Tears.* The little majesty the speech has is contained in the sentences like "Keep back, Conchubor," where the effect is gained by the balanced sentence. There is not tremendous elevation in the speech; there is no comparison, it seems to me, to be made with the speech from Shirley previously given. Deirdre's remarks depend on a wandering sadness; no balance is kept, as in the passage from Shirley, between economy of means and largeness of effect.

Poetry can do all that is done in Synge's prose. It can appeal to further words and further rhythms and phrases, seemingly unreal and out of place in prose, unless it be the much-neglected prose of Shakespeare. Prose is an excellent medium for description, argumentation, comment. And, too, the audience must be directly informed of certain events in the play. But verse can achieve the union of the event and the emotion of the character directly attendant upon it. The failure of prose at such a point is evident in Miss Lyle's flat exposition of herself to Train, in the last act of *Behold, The Bridegroom.*

"No — up to a certain point, I daresay I was the victim of circumstances. But after that I knew better. I've known better for several years. And yet it was during those years I was particularly unrestrained. The recklessness of despair, probably. For something in my nature *told me* that I had blundered fatally; and that some day I would realize it — I realized it — the day I met you, Mr. Train. . . . And as I've thought it over during the past few months, I've concluded that you were the first man that ever appealed to the maternal in me. For as I watched you the first day — one moment I saw only the man who attracted me, and immediately I decided on my usual campaign — and then I'd see the little boy. And it suggested what a little boy of yours might look like. And that did something to me — a kind of casting out of the seven devils, I suppose. . . . You see, I can be very impersonal with you, Mr. Train; for, as I told you, I knew from the first — that my cause was lost."

The heaviness, the banality of the speech require no demonstration; the prosiness of the words and the thought are there to see. Compare it with Cleopatra's speech to Caesar, at a time when her loss is really no greater than Antoinette Lyle's:

"I cannot project mine own cause so well
To make it clear; but do confess I have
Been laden with life frailties which before
Have often sham'd our sex."

or to Phèdre's speech to Thésée, beginning: "Les momens me sont chers, écoutez-moy, Thésée." The speech ends:

"Et la mort, àmes yeux dérobant la clarté,
Rend au jour, qu'ils souilloient, toute sa pureté."

The comparison between prose and poetry is sufficient, without emphasis.

By prose and poetry is, naturally enough, meant prose dialogue and verse dialogue. Again, dramatic verse is considered as of a different genre from the purely lyrical. Nothing is said of the superior merit of one over the other.

"Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
A loss unparalleled,"

has a different intent from

> "I have been half in love with easeful Death
> Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme."

The character of the emotions invoked is different; the latter is more diffuse, scattered, attached to half a dozen associations; the former is grounded in the event immediately at hand, the death of Cleopatra. Its purpose of comment, wild invocation, grief, is built up from a single happening. It serves as many ends as the other, but in a different fashion. At its discriminately chosen peak, dramatic verse is the perfect version of the play for both character and spectator.

Prose dialogue cannot possibly equal verse dialogue; but then neither can lyric verse equal dramatic verse. Prose can embellish itself within the novel and serve the same end dramatic verse can in the play. Had Miss Lyle been given, at the end of the first act, words adequate enough to the occasion, instead of stage directions the effect would have been kindred to the mounting one of a sentence in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice:*

> "And leaning back, his arms loose, overwhelmed, with frequent chills running through him, he whispered the fixed formula of desire, impossible in this case, absurd, abject, ridiculous, and yet holy, even in this case venerable, 'I love you'!"

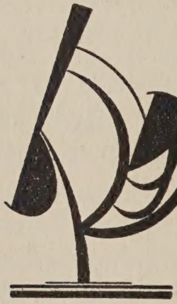
There are minor flaws in *Behold, The Bridegroom,* having nothing to do with the form it is written in. Kelly's play is affected by a certain literariness apparent in the title of the play; and, in the last act, his hero must pursue a literary allusion to the bridegroom's unpreparedness. The defect[4] of literariness may come from reproducing the speech of educated people, which depends very largely for color upon literary allusion; if the play were freed from merely imitative prose the defect might disappear, since verse can provide its own suggestions and analogies. Whether such correction could be made, could be seen only in another version of the play.

---

[4] It may be owing to an element in Kelly's mind. He has been given overmuch to moralizing, anyway. It is painfully present, for example, in *Craig's Wife.*

Minor flaws have nothing to do with the major failure of *Behold, The Bridegroom*, the cramped posture in which it reached the stage. Miss Lyle had all the proportions of an heroic person, a mind and heart working their common destruction. Either one of these might have found utterance, separately, in prose, but the unique combination of the two — unique on this country's stage — needed the majesty of verse. Whether George Kelly is a poet good enough to have given her this remains unknown. And with that remains the demand of the theme of *Behold, The Bridegroom* and like subjects for complete and dominating expression in excellent and dramatic verse.

KENNETH WHITE



WISE MEN ON THE DEATH OF A FOOL

WISE men, when Crosby died, looked on each other
And saw musicians who did not mistake
The catgut of their instruments for heart strings
Withered by necessary, if regretful, Life.

Presume to hold your scales like Radamanthus;
— Wise men, presented in self-portraiture, —
And weigh yourselves and Crosby; your own scales,
(After due vacillations of the dart)
Will rest to show your reassured eyes
A pound of lead outweigh a pound of feathers.

Crosby, in feathers, danced through a sealed house
Which he unsealed, whose Idol's cerements,
In ever lessening spirals, he unwrapped
With helian desire to grasp the *Sun.*

And saw no *sun*, but saw the uncovered *skull*, —
Shuddered upon a sharp and fleshless mouth
And then, to warm his own cold skeleton,
He fired his borrowed feathers. A night bird,
He blazed in plumes of smoke before the crowd.
A traveller once wrote home from Africa:
"I saw the fowl. But the time was out of season.
"It was only a chick. And when young, the Phoenix
"Is no more astounding than a barn-yard cock."

Hierophants turned neophite adore
This worshiper of Faithfulness in wolves,
Wisdom in doves and Gentleness in snakes, —

Let not New England join, from whence he sprang,
Towards which he looked; too eager to amaze;
And wondered, "What may Boston say about me
"Now"; and dying, exulted, wondering "What
"Can they now say?" State Street, maintain your silence.
His mad impiety is holier than your sane,
Infidel doubt; but, you, sane infidels,
You wisemen named in Crosby's diary,
Whose words are linked with his words, be discreet
And please the financiers who have exacted
Murder and suicide with Investment Council.

Let men made easy by his death keep silent
Resenting Crosby's life and Crosby's death
Resenting. Poetry has saints. He was not of them.
His death was his best poem. And Crosby, dead,
Shall live in history like the marauders
Infatuate of new found luxuries
Who fired the scrolls of Alexandria
To warm the water of the Public Baths.

Wise men; without regard to almanacs;
Be amorous, opulent, inebriate;
Penurious, abstinent and solitary.
Wise men are moon gazers who never challenge
The fisher of tides to mesh them in her net.
Wise men have built with calm of Antonine
Their philosophic membranes which absorb
From toxic chaos only pleasing lies.
Magnanimous in bronze, and straddling a stallion
Over the Roman Capitol diffusing
A green benediction rides serene Aurelius.

JOHN WHEELRIGHT

MUSIC CHRONICLE

THE SYMPHONY OF PSALMS

There was a rumor current for several years that Strawinsky was engaged upon some sort of rewriting of Russian Liturgical Music. The last one heard was that this task had been completed, but that the result failed to find favor with those in authority in the Russian Orthodox Church. On what grounds they were dissatisfied, rumor does not say. Whether he ever undertook this work or not, the question of his doing so has, up to now, chiefly interested us by reason of his peculiar genius for rearranging and remodeling the music of others. This he did for Pergolesi in *Pulcinella* and (unaccountably but with mastery) for some rather feeble ideas of Tchaikowski in *Le Baiser de la Fée*. In *Pulcinella* especially, this genius consists in entering imaginatively into the style and feeling of a remote period, without in any sense allowing his own personality or style to become subservient. He somehow manages to give his re-casting of a work composed two centuries ago, all the air of a collaboration. Having accomplished this feat with Pergolesi, it is but likely that he could accomplish as much with the Russian Liturgy. What he could not do for Gregorian Chant, were he to set his mind to the still unsolved problem of its accompaniment?

His latest work, the Symphony of Psalms, gives us, however, a new and particular interest in the possibility of Strawinsky occupying himself with religious music. Of all his works this alone reveals the core of immediate spiritual experience. In the *Sacré du Printemps*, despite its ritualistic character, this core was wholly absent. The later music of *Noces* was still external to it. Here he seemed to have reached its outer shell, but this remained impenetrably hard and enigmatic.[1] In the last movement of the Symphony of Psalms, this core is shown in all its vital warmth and fruitfulness.

---

[1] Strawinsky is quoted as having said privately of *Noces*, after one of those unforgettable first performances in Paris in the Spring of 1924: "Does it not seem to you as though, somewhere beneath all its movement and clamor, there were some hard, immovable object concealed?"

The other two movements were evidently conceived with the last clearly in mind. Musically on a less high plane, their function as prelude and preparation is nevertheless indispensable. The first, on Psalm 39, "Hear My Prayer, O Lord, and Give Ear Unto My Cry," cries out for deliverance from darkness and toil. The choral writing is bare in texture, and the accompaniment consists for the most part of uneasy and reiterated figures. Save for a brief modulatory middle section, it is largely static in construction. In the second movement, Psalm 40, "I Waited Patiently For The Lord," there is a sense of relief, if not from toil, at least from the most crushing part of it. The fugal writing is intricate and somewhat crowded, and the movement as a whole is unquestionably the least interesting of the three. That it is chiefly transitional and preparatory in character is evinced by the close. On the last words, "And shall trust in the Lord," a new sense emerges, neither plaintive as the beginning, nor laborious as the developments, but rather of expectancy having turned all but the last corner, heartened by a refraction of light. In logic of feeling, if not of form, these closing measures serve rather as bridge to the third movement than as final cadence of the second.

A masterpiece always has the appearance of a last word. The third movement, on Psalm 150, "Praise Ye The Lord, Praise God In His Sanctuary," is possibly the summit of Strawinsky's achievement. Never has his language been clearer, nor the feelings conveyed by it finer or more explicit. The principal melodic fragments on which it is based are of extreme simplicity. The harmonic substructure is for the most part hardly more *recherché*. It is in three principal sections, each differing considerably in character from the others. They are bound together chiefly by the recurrence of an *Alleluia* of ineffable tenderness and tranquillity. The short first section, praising the Lord "in the firmament of His power," is grave, quiet, almost hushed. The longer middle section is in a more awakened tempo, and freely developed. The climax, mounting gradually to the words, "Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet," has a kind of lifting power which is unparalleled in any of his other works.

"The heart rears wings bold and bolder,
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet."

Of the final section, it is impossible to speak in adequate terms. Musically it seems made of nothing at all: two more or less commonplace melodic phrases, a bass that continues the same three-note figure for forty-two measures, harmonies that are mostly all old friends. And yet the whole combines in an effect of majestic appeasement that makes one forget there was ever such a thing as "modern music." To the composer of such pages, it is evident that of all actions, that of praising God is the most vital, the most inclusive, and at the same time the most simple.

THEODORE CHANLER

MOVIE CHRONICLE

THE DYNAMIC SQUARE

Suggestions in favor of new proportions for the cinematographic screen advanced in connection with the practical realization of "wide film."

This article is based on the speech made by S. M. Eisenstein during a discussion on "Wide Films" in Relation to Motion Picture Production Technique at a meeting organized by the Technicians Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, in conjunction with the Directors and Producers Branches, Fox Hills Studio, Hollywood, September 17, 1930.

"It is possible that, at first glance, this article may seem too detailed or its subject not being of sufficiently 'profound' value, but it is my wish to point out the basic importance of this problem for every creative art director, director and cameraman. And I appeal to them to take this problem as seriously as possible. For a shudder takes me when I think that, by not devoting enough attention to this problem, and permitting the standardization of new screen shape without the thorough weighing of all the pros and cons of the question, we risk paralyzing once more, for years and years to come, our compositional efforts in new shapes as unfortunately chosen as those from which the practical realization of the Wide Film and Wide Screen now seems to give us the opportunity of freeing ourselves."

S. M. E.

I

No matter what the theoretic premises, only the *square* will provide us the real opportunity at last to give decent shots of so many things banished from the screen until today. Glimpses through winding mediaeval streets or huge Gothic cathedrals overwhelming them. Or these replaced by minarets if the town portrayed should happen to be oriental. Decent shots of totem poles. The Paramount building in New York, Primo Carnera, or the profound and abysmal canyons of Wall Street in all their expressiveness — shots available to the cheapest magazine — yet exiled for thirty years from the screen.

II

Notice the relationship between Hokusai's "100 Views of Fuji" and so many camera shots made with so pronounced tendency towards shooting two plans of depth — one through another (specially "Fuji seen through a cobweb" and "Fuji seen through the legs," or Edgar Degas, whose startling series of compositions of women in the bath, modistes and blanchisseuses, is the best school in which to acquire training ideas about space composition within the limits of a frame — and about frame composition too, which, in these series, restlessly jumps from the proportions of 1:2 over 1:1 to 2:1.

III

We must yet consider another remarkable phenomenon of Japanese art: the materialization on paper of the above mentioned absence of side boundaries in the form of the horizontal *roll picture* born, only in Japan and China, and not ruling elsewhere. I would call it *unroll picture*, because unwound horizontally from one roll to another it shows interminable episodes of battles, festivals, processions. Example: the pride of the Boston Museum; — the many feet long "Burning of the Sanjo Palace." Or the immortal "Killing of the Bear in the Emperor's Garden" in the British Museum. Having created this unique type of horizontal picture out of the supposed horizontal tendency of perception, the Japanese, with their supersensitive artistic feeling, then created the *opposite form* — as a matter of purely aesthetic need for counterbalance, for Japan (with China) is also the birthplace of the *vertical roll picture*. The tallest of all vertical compositions (if we disregard the Gothic vertical window compositions). Roll pictures are also found to take the form of curiously shaped coloured woodcuts of upright composition, with the most amazing compositional disposition of faces, dresses, background elements and stage attributes.

This, I hold, shows pretty clearly that even if the diagnosis of perception as horizontal should be correct (which should by no means be regarded as proved), vertical composition also is needed as harmonic counter-balance to it.

IV

Remains the last argument — the economic.

The horizontally extended form corresponds most closely to the shape left for the eye by the balcony overhanging the back of the parterre, and by the series of balconies each overhanging the other. The absolute possible limit of screen height in these conditions is estimated by Spenable as 23 feet to every 46 of horizontal possibilities.

If we are to remain governed by strictly economic considerations — we might well allow that by using vertical compositions we should oblige the public to move to the more expensive forward seats free of overhanging balconies. . . .

But another fact comes to our rescue — and this is the unfitness of the present shape and proportions of the cinema theatre of today for *sound purposes*.

Acoustics help optics!

I have not the time to examine references in looking up the ideal proportions for a sound theatre.

I faintly recall from my dim and distant past study of architecture that, in theatre and concert buildings, the vertical cut should, for optimum acoustics, be parabolic.

What I do remember clearly is the shape and the typical proportions of two ideal buildings. One ideal for optical display:

Let us take the Roxy (New York).

And one for auditive display:

The Salle Pleyel in Paris — the peak acoustic perfections hitherto attained in a concert hall.

They are *exactly* opposed in proportions to each other. If the Salle Pleyel were to lay upon its side it would become a Roxy. If the Roxy were to stand upright it would become a Salle Pleyel. Every proportion of the Roxy split horizontally into parterres and balconies opposes itself directly to the strictly vertical, receding into depth, corridor-like Salle Pleyel.

The sound film — the intersection of optic and auditive display, will have to synthesize in the shape of its display hall, both tendencies with equal force.

V

I must energetically defy one more creeping tendency that has partially triumphed over the talkies and which now stretches out its unclean hands towards the Grandeur film, hastening to force it, in yet greater degree, to kneel subservient to its base desires. This is the tendency entirely to smother the principles of montage,* already weakened by the 100 per cent talkies, which yet wait for the first powerful example of the perfectly cut and constructed sound film that will establish anew the montage principle as the basic, everlasting, and vital principle of cinematographic expression and creation.

I refer to innumerable quotations, quotations partially accepted even by such great masters of the screen as my friend Vidor and the Great Old Man of all of us — D. W. Griffith. For example:

". . . Dance scenes need no longer be 'followed' as there is ample room in a normal long shot for all the lateral movement used in most dances. . . ."

(The "moving camera" is a means of affecting in the spectator a specific dynamic feeling, and not a means of investigation or following dancing girl feet! See the rocking movement of the camera in the reaping scene of "Old and New" and the same with the machine gun in "All Quiet on the Western Front." — S. E.)

". . . Close-ups can be made on the wide film. Of course, it is not necessary to get as close as you do with the 35 mm. camera, but, comparatively speaking, you can make the same size of close-up . . . !"

(The impressive value of a close-up lies not at all in its absolute size, but entirely in its size relation to the optical affective impulse produced by the dimension of the previous and following shots. — S. E.)

VI

The advent of the wide screen marks one further stage of enormous progress in the development of montage, which once more will have to undergo a critical review of its laws; laws mightily affected by the change of absolute screen dimension making impossible or unsuitable quite a number of the montage processes of the days of the olden screen, but on the other hand providing us with such a gigantic new agent of impression as the rhythmic assemblage of varied screen shapes, the attack upon our perceptive field of the affective impulses associated with the geometric and dimensional variation of the successive various possible dimensions, proportions and designs.

---

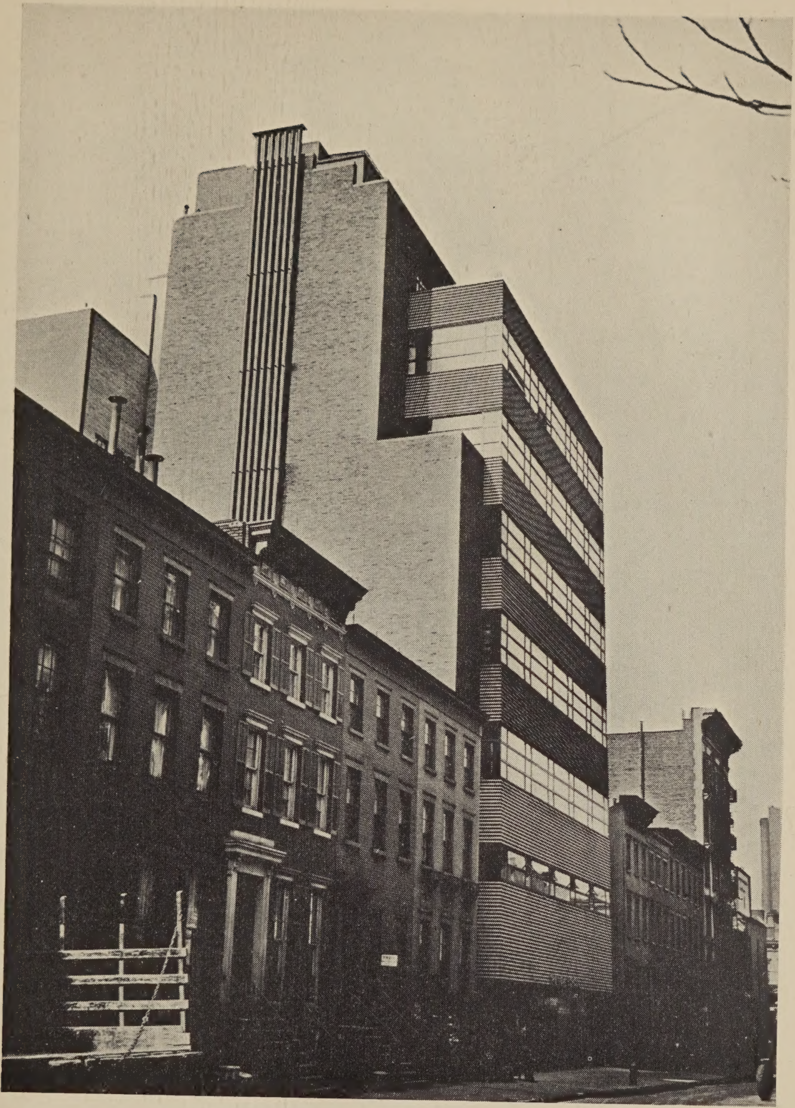
*Montage is the principal of editing the film freely for the most effective use of contrast and tempo, by juxtaposition of various sections not necessarily chronologically related. (Editors.)

And, accordingly, if, to many of the qualities of Normal Screen montage laws we must proclaim: ". . . le roi est mort!"

Yet with much greater strength we must acclaim with "vive le roi!" the newcoming of the hitherto unvisualized and hitherto unimaginable montage possibilities of Grandeur Film!

SERGEI EISENSTEIN

Santa Maria Tonantzintla, Cholula, Mexico.



Walker Evans

The New School for Social Research
Josef Urban, Architect

ARCHITECTURE CHRONICLE

Is Character Necessary?

The buildings recently erected in New York by the New York Chapter of the American Red Cross and by the New School for Social Research offer unusual opportunities for comparison. Both are the new permanent homes of organizations essentially of the twentieth century, unconnected with any other place, time or tradition. Both organizations are completely non-commercial in character. Both own and occupy exclusively these buildings and were entirely free in designing them to express private attitudes and ambitions, an expression unhampered by usual restrictions due to consideration of rentability, resale or commercial obsolescence.

Whether or not these structures are "good" or "bad" architecture is not to be discussed here save as the bias of the reader draws implications from the comparison. These buildings stand as typical examples of two attitudes in architectural expression, each having many followers and a full complement of reasons to justify the stand.

The Red Cross Building asserts nothing. It is negative, entirely content to remain a background against which the ensuing action may take place without antagonism. The New School is positive. It not only anticipates and contributes to the action which will ensue but asserts an effectiveness of character in its own right, entirely apart from that action.

It is from the point of view of this divergence in the desire to express character that I wish to compare the buildings. Two meanings of the word "character" are involved in this divergence. The first is well known in every architectural school. It is that quality in the design which should make the type, purpose and problem of the particular building apparent to the spectator, — a market on a flat lot, a bank on a corner, a Court of Justice, etc. (We have seen this "character" so consistently mishandled that today most markets look like banks, the banks like Courts of Justice and the Courts of Justice like the classical dream of a marble-quarry man.) Character in its second sense connotes an "effectiveness" in the design, a distinctiveness unrelated to the character of the building in the first sense. Thus a filling station masquerading as a Temple of Love might yet be distinguished from its fellow Temples by this distinctiveness of design.

The Red Cross Building, designed by Delano and Aldrich, is not particularly interested in character in the first sense. By type, problem and purpose it is a small steel skeleton office building located on a flat corner lot in a large city, and it serves as the administrative headquarters of a modern philanthropic organization. But the design pays little heed to its location on a corner. The symmetrical arrangement runs on the two free sides and only the unfortunate existence of buildings on the other two sides prevented it from running completely around. In fact above the setback level it does embrace a third side and on the tank tower it makes the circuit. Due partly to this symmetricality increasing as the portions of the building become free standing, but largely to the enormous tower of brickwork which cloaks the water tank the building has more the appearance of a miniature skyscraper than a small building, just as a dwarf appears to be a miniature man rather than merely a small one. Nor is attention paid to an expression of the steel skeleton. Not that it must be either "horizontal" or "vertical" or a waffle of squares but that the masonry shell should not appear to be a bearing wall. Here quite frankly the design is such as to suggest a bearing wall and in fact to be translatable into one without change in a single detail of façade.

The New School, designed by Joseph Urban, is emphatic about all these things. It is a small, steel skeleton building on a flat interior lot in a large city and serves the manifold purposes of a center of adult education. Closeting the steel frame is an envelope of brick and glass obviously more supported than supporting. The long horizontals of window and wall return to a decisive stop against the black mass of the building, emphasizing the single face to the façade. The design accepts the low height of the building and though small in size is quite assured of its own dignity.

The exterior of the Red Cross Building gives no sign of the type of organization working within. It could well be an apartment house designed in a neutral fashion so as not to antagonize violently the tastes of the multitudes of people who might wish to live in it. This resemblance is probably due to two efforts. The first an effort to retain that relation of wall to window, a solid flat wall pierced by small windows of less total area than the remaining wall, which tradition has declared to be agreeable. Only too often is the resulting surface, as here, a sheet of cardboard shot full of holes giving neither the desired relationship of solid to void nor the impression of an ordered arrangement. And the second is an effort to avoid that customary bugaboo among clients of "artistic taste," the appearance of a "factory"; even when the needs of an office building for light, air and practicality are just those which led industrialists, less burdened by preconceptions, to evolve the factory type.

By contrast, the exterior of the New School stands decisive, unambiguous. It is willing to face the probably hostile glance of the public and anxious to exemplify some "character." As Douglas Haskell in his review of this building in *The New Republic* for February 25, pointed out, the façade makes one think a section of the Van Nelle tobacco factory at Rotterdam had been transcribed for use on 12th Street. But whether or not this building does or should look like a factory it is aggressively sure that it wants to look like something definite. Equally surely it wants to be thought "effective" in its own right, independently of the purpose of the building.

In the expression of effectiveness, the second meaning of "character," there is a similar difference between the two designs. Where the impression created by the façade of the Red Cross Building is diffuse and retiring, that of the New School is intense and assertive. Only a vague pattern ties together the many elements making up the former. The windows and wall are so divided and proportioned that no definite effective order is visible. Apparently to overcome this, vertical projections in brick were stuck on the wall between the pairs of windows, cutting the surface into bays. But these irresolute verticals are so spaced that the net result was adding just five more elements to an already large number making each façade.

When the number of elements to be composed is very large the best one can do with them, usually, is to form a pattern that is not unpleasing unless by arbitrary groupings of elements one so reduces the apparent number that a decisive composition becomes possible. We can see striking examples of this procedure in the design of many of the apartment houses and housing groups abroad. The New School is similar to many of these. However coarse and ungracious one may feel it, the effectiveness is undeniable. Here is no conflict between competing elements but a studied, though arbitrary, integration.

One among these elements is that of color. Usually we see it handled as it is in the Red Cross Building. There the warm yellow-brown-red of the brickwork is very well matched by the yellow mortar, the yellow-brown coping stone and the paint on the sash. But this color has no relation to the design of the façade, in that any other harmony of color would do as well. The design stands in black and white and color is later added. But in the New School the color, black granite and black and white brick, is an integral part of the design, inseparable from it. The scheme of composition, of movement, is as much dependent on the opposition and play of color and value as on the arrangement of the openings. Though the color might be different it must be used in the same way or the design itself is altered.

When we look inside the buildings further and similar comparisons occur. There is the same divergence between negative and positive. In both buildings are rooms where an effect beyond that of mere empty office floor or classroom was desired. Typical of them may stand, for the Red Cross Building the Entrance Lobby and the Assembly Room on the second floor, and for the New School the Lobby and Auditorium on the ground floor. The former are volumes subsequently decorated by architecture; the latter are architecturally decorative volumes. The former are backgrounds, deliberately expressing a neutrality in character and quite incomplete until filled with furniture, drapes, people and so forth; the latter are complete in themselves, requiring no "decoration" other than flat colors to give both life and character. In the former lights are added, along with all the other accessories, unintegrated with the design except for superficial similarities in the detail and of forms which almost as well could be for oil or candles. In the latter the lighting, in ribs, depressions, ceiling coves, and so forth, is inseparable from the design and of a character purely electric.

So we might continue through the two structures. Each stands as a type. The Red Cross Building marks the traditional movement at a time when that is stumped by the new problems that face it, and remains ambiguous due to the conflict. The New School marks the so-called modern movement, a movement ready to meet new problems in new ways, free from the limitations imposed by the precedent in historical pigeon-holes.

LYMAN PAINE

CORRESPONDENCE

February 6, 1931

Editors of
The Hound & Horn, Inc.,

Dear Sir:

A copy of your magazine was handed to me the other day, in which I was given a great deal of attention by a Mr. Webber.[*] I did not know, when I built the News Building, that it would make anybody as angry as it has Mr. Webber. If I had known, however, it would not have made any difference, as I did not build the building to please him.

It was built to please and satisfy, to the best of my ability, the News and the other tenants who would occupy and help pay for it. I did not feel under the same obligation to people who would merely look at it or write about it. There is no dogma, architectural or otherwise, about the building, other than that. There is no modernity about it unless it be that it strives to satisfy the people who live in it in preference to those who do not. It is neither a challenge to the future, a record of our civilization, a message to posterity nor any new development in the theory of architecture. It is a building that will, doubtless, be torn down in twenty years or so and I hope Mr. Webber will not be unduly worried. I do not know who Mr. Webber is but, without challenging his general knowledge of architecture, I feel that I have a particular acquaintance of the plan, renting, sub-division, etc., of this particular building, that he has not.

Sincerely yours,

Raymond M. Hood

---

[*] "Architecture Chronicle." The Hound & Horn, Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 270.

CORRESPONDENCE

January 28, 1931

Editors of
The Hound & Horn, Inc.,

Sirs:

In correcting Mr. Wheelwright's review,[1] William Carlos Williams[2] falls into several errors. Charles McKim died in 1909, not in 1908. The American Academy in Rome property on the Janiculum was acquired November 4, 1910, not in 1912. The Academy buildings were designed by William Mitchell Kendall, not Mitchel Kendal. Surely it cannot be true that "it is not certainly recalled in McKim's office who designed the building," since Mr. Kendall is now the head of the firm of McKim, Mead & White. As a matter of fact, I know that his subsequent work, distinguished as it is, has not caused him to forge designing the Academy main building and the tablet therein to its founder, Charles Follin McKim.

Yours,

Charles Moore

Wallingford: Connecticut
19 january: 1931

Editors of
The Hound & Horn, Inc.,
New York City

Sirs:

May I call attention to two serious typographical errors in my review of Mr Ezra Pound's *A Draft of XXX Cantos*, in the Winter number of Hound & Horn?[3]:

1] Page 287; quotation from Canto XXIII: seven verses mysteriously disappeared from this after I had returned the proofs. Since the omission of these verses entirely obscures the sense of the passage, as well as perverting its rhythmic and melodic force, may I supply the lacuna as follows?:

---

[1] The Hound & Horn, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 138.

[2] Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 277.

[3] Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 278.

. . . . &c
Odysseus furrowed the sand.)
alixantos, aliotrephès, eiskatebaine, down into,
descended, to the end that, beyond ocean,
pass through, traverse
ποτὶ βένθεα
νυκτὸς ἐρεμνᾶς
ποτὶ ματέρα, κουριδίαν τ'ἄλοχον
παῖδας τε φίλους ἔβα κατάσκιον

Precisely, the selv' oscura
&c &c . . . .

(The proofreader has apparently deleted, from my footnote to this passage, the notice that I have emended Mr Pound's ψίλους [line 16] to φίλους; which leads me to suspect that the cut was not wholly accidental.)

2] Page 280; quotation (*b*): why the compositor should persist in rendering Mr Pound's *e iss* in Greek characters, in spite of proof corrections, I can't imagine. At any rate, lest the reader charge the poet with a more perverse eccentricity than he actually possesses, may the first verse of this passage be restored thus?:

Looka vat youah Trotzsk is done, e iss

And, since I'm about it, I should like to record two other errors, of minor importance:

a] Page 284, line 25: *for* Pierre Vidal *read* Peire Vidal
b] Page 281, last line: *for* '*tethnéké; read* '*tethnéké*';

Yrs, &c.,

DUDLEY FITTS

BOOK REVIEWS

GENIUS

SAVAGE MESSIAH. *By H. S. Ede. New York.* 1931. *Alfred A. Knopf.* $5.00.

Genius is, perhaps, quickness of perception, plus action on the initial impulse and in the exhaustion of every possible reference of a creative idea. It differs from talent more in degree than in quality. Genius is a terrifying word; to cover our fear of it and our impotence in the face of its real meaning we bandy it about, hoping to wear the edge off its blade, and attribute to any talent beyond competence the accolade of genuine distinction. So it is with deliberation, humility and courage that one approaches the name of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, to call him "genius." Chatterton, Keats, Shelley, Aubrey Beardsley and Rupert Brooke: Englishmen, geniuses, of course. Their memory is generally held as holy by virtue of their personal charm and beauty, by early and tragic death, as by their endeavor.

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, born French, may be considered an Englishman, since his chief affiliations in ideas and friendships were British and his work was done mainly in London. He was shot fighting for France. He was a genius not because of his personal beauty, his great charm; not for his death at the age of twenty-three, but even in spite of these decorations. He was a genius because of his sculpture and his life.

When Gaudier came into the room "it was like the appearance of Apollo in a creditor's meeting," wrote Ford Madox Ford. "For he had great personal beauty. If you looked at him casually, you imagined that you were looking at one of those dock-rats of the Marseilles quays, who will carry your baggage for you, pimp for you, garotte you and throw your body over-board — but who will do it all with an air, an ease, an exquisiteness of manners!" "It was not that he was made up like any particular Renaissance picture"; said Ezra Pound, "I have seen men made up to the very image of Del Sarto or of some other historic person, but here was the veritable spirit of awakening. He was, of course, indescribably like some one whom one had met in the pages of Castiglione or Valla, or perhaps in a painting forgotten." And when one who never saw him looks at his amazing photograph, there springs to mind only a fusion of historic parallels; — the penetration of an Etruscan profile, — sensitive, cunning, not from avarice but in the pursuit of a vital technique; the delicate thin mouth of a Clouet drawing; the articulation of high cheekbones, the generous placing of the eyes as on medals more delicate than Pisanello's. Vulpine, humorous, childish and wise, it is not the face of easy amiability, but of simplicity, direction, ruthlessness and the capacity for large affections.

Henri Gaudier was born at St. Jean de Braye, near Orleans, October 4, 1891. His father was a carpenter, and there was a family tradition that his ancestors carved on the Cathedral of Chartres. He did well in the village school, went to Orleans at fifteen, winning scholarships which took him to England. He later went to University College, Bristol; worked as clerk in a Cardiff contractor's office and spent vacations in the countryside of Somerset and Dorset. He had been drawing constantly since he was six years old. In 1909 he went to Nuremberg and then worked in Munich where he was supposed to have been employed faking Rembrandts. In 1910 he returned to Paris, and reading one winter's day at the Bibliotheque St. Genevieve met Sophie Brzeska.

She was a Polish woman of considerable education and refinement. At the time of their meeting she had thirty-nine years of family unhappiness, continual hopes, disappointments, incessant loneliness, and nervous distractions to the point of insanity as her whole fortune. Mr. Ede's *Savage Messiah* tells the story of her relationship with Gaudier, who took her name, who in the end hoped to marry her, and who was as faithful to her through their five years of reciprocal irritation, agony and great happiness, as he was to his sculpture.

Savage Messiah is the history of a connection which is as tragic, as vivid, as personal and unforgettable as the life of Héloïse and Abélard. It is more impressive in its anatomizing of two agonies than most histories and memoirs of the Great War, which terminated the one agony, and accelerated the end of the other. Miss Brzeska was nearly middle-aged. She had been almost married several times and had once really loved a man, somewhat older than herself. But she was so conditioned by disappointment that she never could afford a really satisfactory relationship. Gaudier, on the other hand, had never known a woman before. His own great loneliness and the talents of his youth made him more than eager to share his ideas and his love with a woman, particularly a woman who knew the world, who seemed to be so sensitive, who could love him.

But in the end Sophie Brzeska had for him only her beautiful hands, and an intermittent capacity for solace. She was tired, she was terribly nervous. She came only very slowly to love him with the physicality he demanded. She could, naturally enough, best feel for him only as a mother. Her ragged mind, a patchwork of indiscriminate reading and vague feelings for ideas, for beauty, for truth, was a constant disappointment to Gaudier. In fact Miss Brzeska was in no way a distinguished, or a happy choice for a lover, except in her passionate loyalty born of solitude and suffering. "Your code for an honest life is conventional," he would write her, "and was acquired by legions of individuals in the past, a perpetual adaptation to the needs of the moment—" Or, "You, you don't know how to enjoy, for you don't recognize differences, and judge always on a basis of your literary idea. . . . It is no use for Mamus (Miss Brzeska) to waste herself in theories, for she lies to herself all the time."

From the first they were hounded by poverty and bad luck. Sophie was ill and worn out. She felt she must go to the country and Gaudier persuaded her to come down to a place near his parents. Evil-minded neighbors made a scandal at once and they left, bitter and exhausted for London. It was always a matter of just a little more money, just a little more strength, and all would be well. They were always on the periphery of success, of happiness. One step ahead and complete bliss, one step back and the most profound gloom; mutual recrimination. In London it took him a while to get work, to meet friends. When he did finally, he was constantly buoyed up by potential patronage. Somehow most of the promises fell through. His new friends, and there were many, from Haldane Macfall, Frank Harris, Lovat Fraser, Horace Brodzky to Ezra Pound, were a constant source of expectation and hope. Ezra Pound who wrote, in 1916, the first memoir of Gaudier, was, however, almost the only person with whom, for one reason or another, Henri never quarrelled. The altercation with Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield, so deliciously described by Mr. Ede, is the most typical of a series of protracted affairs which always commenced with enormous enthusiasm and eagerness on the part of the Gaudier-Brzeskas, and because of fancied or actual slights ended in violent, brilliant and lengthy denunciation. Everyone was an absolute saint for sympathy or a demon of misunderstanding.

The essentials of life were their constant lookout; where to get enough money, enough to eat, enough rest; they both had the overweening pride of the very poor. They managed to keep themselves clean and Sophie would invent excuses to hide their actual condition from anyone who might want to help them. If some one liked one of his drawings, he would give it away. "Take it; it is nothing. I have hundreds more." In the meantime they managed to exist in the most sordid poverty; not only to exist but to live and work. Gaudier was proud, but he never let himself be seduced by his own conceit, or by the crushing weight of his misfortunes.

In 1910, at the age of nineteen, Henri Gaudier made a great decision. He definitely decided to give up all color-work and devote himself entirely to the plastic. He had never been able to see color detached from form. Drawing and modelling were all he was concerned with. He wrote that painting was too complicated with its oils and pigments, and too easily destroyed. "What is more, I love the sense of creation, the ample voluptuousness of kneading the material and bringing forth life, a joy which I never found in painting. . . . Sculpture is the art of expressing the reality of ideas in the most palpable form." His first great passion was Rodin. He admired as well Whistler's "Mother" and Puvis. He read Taine carefully, and Bergson. He translated the first five cantos of the Inferno as an exercise. In a curious, but by no means superficial way, he was erudite. In politics, in ethnology, in the poetry of France and England, and most of all in the Fine Arts, he presupposed a general background of information that he felt was the common property of every man, whether sculptor or not. One may now wonder at his youthful passion for Rodin. But it was the young Rodin he admired, particularly the Baptist and the Man with the Broken Nose. Gaudier was a fine draughtsman, but he felt the appalling limitations of a purely linear approach. He admired Rodin, opposed to all the other sculptors of the Nineteenth Century, except Carpeaux and Barye, as the epitome of the expression of the non-existent *line*. Later, to be sure, Rodin modelled only in shadows. "He painted with stone." Gaudier admired him in opposition to Flaxman, Alfred Stevens, and the French Academies, not ahead of Egypt or Michelangelo. As for the Greeks, "The Victory (of Samothrace) is beautiful, not because its silhouette is abominably weak and monotonous, but because the masses of which it is composed have sufficient truth in their disposition to give the sensation of many rhythms."

In his drawings he felt the influence of paleolithic accuracy and the action and cinematic energy of the Dordogne caves. His drawings are not draughtsman's drawings like Ingres', or painters' drawings like Degas'. They are always nervous and loosely accurate, more than line, though rarely shaded. He uses line as descriptive of mass, never merely as an interesting profile — always as a sculptural silhouette. It is characteristic of Clive Bell's transplanted chauvinism that he speaks of Gaudier's drawing as clever, as too facile, as indicative that the boy would never have done much more than what he did. The patronizing critic only sees drawings as decoration — as framed in a French mat and an antique frame. But let a sculptor look at Gaudier's sketches!

Gaudier appreciated the best of Rodin and later came to know Brancusi and Epstein, to recall the strength of French and German Gothic, Chou bronzes and Congo carving. His sculpture as it is left to us, may not at first seem particularly impressive since it never reached ultimate fruition and is usually expressed only on a small scale. But we must not forget that he worked twenty years ago, that while his work seems to us conservatively "modern" still, Gaudier was a pioneer — he was creating his own idiom. He felt independently the electricity in the air, shared as well by Brancusi, Epstein and Modigliani. He did all his own redefining, his discoveries of ways and means. One can count twenty good painters since the Renaissance, but how many sculptors? How many men have there been since 1650 who have had an impulse and a conviction towards sculpture? How many have realized that an isolated, free-standing group is more than four jointed high-reliefs? How many have not failed to succumb to the blandishments of a more or less sturdy subservience to what Gaudier called "the Bourdelle-Maillol mixture," a respectful archaistic, static placidity? Gaudier's impulse was toward sculpture. He indicated in his medium, in all the possible acceptance of its limitations and advantages, truths similar to Cézanne in plastic paint, or Corbusier in plastic architecture. In his book on *Some Modern Sculptors*, Stanley Casson says of Gaudier's 'Dancer' — "In his interpretation of movement he really achieves a new style in modern sculpture. The 'Dancer' is a figure in which movement is detected rather than seen, and detected at a moment when it is neither static nor in motion, when it is potential and not stopped. No sculptor, to my knowledge, has ever depicted a figure thus *descending* out of one movement into another. Rodin's definition of movement as *transition* is here carried out more clearly than he could ever have wished and more effectively than he could ever have achieved."

In looking over the photographs in Mr. Ede's wonderful book,* one cannot help be astonished at Gaudier's penetration and range. The portrait heads in their fluid incision recall Daumier's small bronze sketches or Houdon's plaster, and make Epstein, on the same level of aim, somewhat the vulgarian. The statuettes of animals are indescribably delicious. They do not insult the beasts with a cuteness, or a diminutive sentimentality, but in the dogs, the cats, the reclining fawns we have the essence of animals so perfectly described by Ezra Pound as the "sniff and foot pad of beasts, fur on my knee-cap." In the larger and more generalized groups there is always a dignity of realization beyond the "good idea" of experiment. Brancusi has logically, perhaps too logically, propelled himself towards the hell of perfectionists and technicians. Epstein maintains his moody, atavistic taciturnity — the oppressive weight of the womb which he anticipated at the start of his career.

---

* A Life of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska: by H. S. Ede (assistant, National Gallery, Millbank) accompanied by 67 Collotype Reproductions. Super Royal 4 to (13¼ x 10¼) 206 pp. + xvi. 24 illustrations in the text. William Heinemann Ltd. 99 Great Russell Street, London, W. C. 1. 1930 (1). Fifteen guineas net. Limited to 350 copies. Printed on hand-made paper, and bound in full buckram. "Savage Messiah" published by A. A. Knopf is the American trade edition of this magnificent monograph, a masterpiece of technical reproductions and editorial arrangement.

And then there is the "Bourdelle-Maillol" mixture. But Gaudier was a technician and a fine one. Gaudier realized the earth's gravity. Only he never allowed himself to exhaust a single vein, which he personally may have invented or rediscovered. There was a constant progression, reintegration, broadening, a constant respect for the subject matter, the subject matter first, last, and all the time, and the subject matter was humanity. As a socialist, he was not interested in the politics of socialism as a political theory, but only as an artist's organized approach to the interdependencies of life.

The personality of some artists stand out from their characters like another masterpiece, or mystify us by a similar quality, which for lack of documentation, we call anonymity. In Gaudier's case we have virtually a complete documentation. The very cadence of his letters, so brilliantly translated by Mr. Ede from the original French, give an extraordinarily vivid picture of a personality — affectionate, with all the private idiosyncrasies and languages of affection; at one moment humorous, cajoling, at another pitifully insecure and courageous; at another swift, direct, brilliantly analytic, fiercely definite. "I am modest, but not humble; that is a Christian stupidity; I know what to do, and when I do something really good, or even only fairly good, I say so without hesitation; but I see my faults, and the proof of this is that when I do something bad I burn it." It was always the object of creation with which Gaudier was occupied, never himself, as an introspective, abused or "inspired" creator. "Beware of your imagination," he wrote Sophie, "make it serve you to a good end by mating it with your observation, your knowledge of real life, true things that are beautiful because they exist." He had the best kind of energy, the energy to investigate every succeeding problem as if it were the first. He never let past observation do the automatic labor for a new problem. He was never, in any way, inert. He was also articulate. He thought clearly and while he worked with his hands as much as his brain, that is, in our parlance he "did," as much as he "talked," he also wrote some few pages in his letters and manifestos that are as profound an analysis and definition of sculpture and art as have ever been written. They are the opinions of a technician, an artist, a sculptor, raised to the highest degree of acuteness — of genius. He was, as far as he lived, a conscious artist. He knew what was necessary in life, from a knowledge of what life held and withheld. He knew sculpture from the same organization and knowledge of possibilities.

> "The great thing is: That Sculpture consists in placing planes according to a rhythm
> That painting consists in placing colours according to a rhythm
> That literature consists in placing stories according to a rhythm
> That music consists in placing sounds according to a rhythm

"and that movement outside anyone of these is not permitted, that they are severely confined and limited, and that any inclusion of one into the domain of the other is a fault in taste and comprehension." The History of Sculpture was first published as a manifesto in Wyndham Lewis' short lived but brilliant vorticist paper *Blast*.

> "Sculptural energy is the mountain.
> Sculptural feeling is the appreciation of masses in relation.
> Sculptural ability is the defining of these masses by planes."

In *Savage Messiah*, H. S. Ede has exercised the greatest of taste, tact and imagination in the arrangement of the Gaudier-Brzeska documents. It may have been a great temptation not to treat their lives as a novel, or as a "novelized" biography in the taste of Strachey. Mr. Ede never, for a moment, appears as an illuminator, as an illustrator for his wonderful story. His anonymity is complete. But the vividness with which he has used their words to describe their deeds recalls only the great biographers, Cavendish and Boswell. When he actually must use his own words, it is with the leanest of suggestion, but it is never dryly factual. The description of Sophie and Henri's first meeting, the Middleton Murry-Katherine Mansfield fracas and the beautiful last paragraphs are distinguished, Plutarchian writing. *Savage Messiah* is not a critique of Gaudier as a sculptor or as a theorist. It is the life of a man who was, as well, a genius and a sculptor. The excellent photographs tell more about

Gaudier's work than words could. One might wish that the history of sculpture and the manifesto from the trenches had been included for the sake of completeness, but these can be found in Ezra Pound's memoir. An index would have helped the many to whom this book will be a text and a necessity.

Mr. Ede mentions Gaudier's death in a footnote. Nothing could be observed as a greater compliment to the biographer or to the sculptor. There is no necessity for a sentimental glorification of his death as such. His death was romantic but irrelevant. His genius was inevitable. Could one say of Chatterton, of Shelley, of Keats, of Aubrey Beardsley or of Rupert Brooke that their deaths really robbed them of a progressive, ever broadening and crowning creation? Yet without indulging in hypothesis or bitterness, what we know of Gaudier gives us every reason to believe that had he not died at twenty-three, the Twentieth Century would have shared the felicity of the Sixteenth in the possession of a great sculptor.

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

1. Gaudier-Brzeska: A memoir by Ezra Pound: including the published writings of the sculptor, and a selection from his letters, with 38 illustrations, consisting of photographs of his sculpture, and four portraits by Walter Bennington, and numerous reproductions of drawings. London. John Lane. The Bodley Head. New York. John Lane Company. MCMXVI.

2. H. Gaudier-Brzeska. 1891–1915. A portfolio of reproductions. Elephant folio. London. The Ovid Press. 43 Belsize Park Gardens, N. W. (London). 1919.

3. Gaudier had drawings in the first edition of Haldane Macfall's *Splendid Wayfaring*, in *Blast*, the vorticist magazine (1914–1915) and in *The Apple*.

4. Reproductions of Gaudier's sculpture may be found in the two Sales Catalogues of the John Quinn Collection, American Art Association and Weyhe's, New York 1927. There is a section devoted to Gaudier in Stanley Casson's *Some Modern Sculptors:* Oxford University Press. 1928, pages 93–100, with four half-tone reproductions. There is a drawing of a tiger well reproduced in Sir Joseph Duveen's *Thirty Years of British Art.* The Studio. London 1930.

THE GOOD BOY WHO ENJOYED THE CAKE

Charles W. Eliot. *By Henry James. Houghton, Mifflin Co.* 1930. 2 *vols.* $10.00.

Eliot would have quarrelled with Shelley, but it could not have been upon matters of principle, for Eliot was an anarchic pantheist. He was a late flower of the hardy Brahmin culture. This culture, like a form of life, was of delicate and paradoxical cohesion. In it the eccentric and centrifugal forces of the 18th-century revolutionary doctrines once floated with equilibrium. They dried up and are blowing away.

The little Brahmin sprang from small seed risen to flourish in luxury and honor. Honor was divorced from politics, and luxury from vice. Water froze in pitchers on washstands every winter night. Every winter day there were Paddys to fight on the Common. The little Brahmin learned that "when a good cause has been defeated, its advocates need ask only: When do we fight again?" He went to the King's Chapel twice on Sunday to learn how to sit up straight and how to listen. He would owe salvation to his character, and his character to his sect. As once and for all the King's Chapel had freed the Brahmins from the fear of damnation, so the Brahmins supposed that they themselves were saved. "Why should we seek for God? God is everywhere. We do not find our salvation in the King's Chapel. It is our birthright."

"When I look back upon my former little self, the child commands the man's respect, and I hold it to be a sure ground of hope, in this world and the next, that I have grown from so estimable a boy." What then, does a good boy do? "He is useful; he encourages progress, power and wealth; and he discourages vice. He does all this in order to be an honorable, responsible, successful and distinguished man of influence and reputation, and a good citizen." "If I prove to be a good boy, I shall enjoy the cake."

Emerson's lecture on Worship angered the good youth. "Emerson could not distinguish truth from commonplace. Emerson made the Federal Union seem to be unsafe." The estimable youth left the lecture and went to burn his fingers at his toy chemical forge. Transcendentalism had nothing to do with the King's Chapel. The King's Chapel was reasonable. Scientists were the best citizens.

The estimable youth worked hard. He made little progress in studies which bored him, but toward others he advanced far. When the Brahmins mocked him: "What are you studying Chemistry for? Do you want to be a teacher?" he saw that after all there was some sense to Emerson: "Nature, when she sends a new mind into the world, fills it beforehand with the knowledge of what she intends it to do."

The good young man entered upon his career and ran with such fervor that he frightened the other runners. They tripped him up. He went to Europe and asked questions and learned that in Continental Universities the quality of instruction was high and the range of subjects wide. Though he thought, "Self-culture too selfish to be a source of happiness" he was a little wistful because he "had no time" to learn any of these subjects. It never occurred to him that in a university a society of minds grew to know themselves and each other.

Ignorant like a savage, he returned home with a fixed antipathy to things which are called Monarchism, Catholicism, Classicism, and with fixed sentiments which were quaint in one whose ambition was to be not a scientist, but a teacher of science. His inability, through these antipathies and these sentiments, to make real to the present its continuity with the past, would scarcely be apparent in the Boston Tech. He took to power as a duck takes to water.

Suddenly he found himself President of Harvard. Destiny had deftly removed him from competition. At the inauguration, Emerson sat up in front, listening to him, smiling and assenting. Listener and speaker were alike deceived that the words were the words of a convert. Mrs. Cabot wept for joy. King Log had made room for King Stork. Was it a president's duty to preside? Very well then, he presided over every meeting of every faculty. The rude, cool, grave young man with a voice like an undertaker's, calmly turned things upside down with a placid smile on his face. The anarch's forty years of struggle was largely to prohibit academic disciplinarians from playing practical jokes on their students — such as when they would not let them take books out of the library, etc.,

etc. His reforms were self-evidently dictated by common sense. His revolution was doctrinaire. The doctrine was a negative theory of freedom from restraint; its positive character was entirely practical. His doctrine consisted in its performance. It was thus that his acts, in contrast to those of his predecessor and his successor, seem like the good works of the Elect of God.

He at last reformed a seminary where young men were kept out of mischief and made it into something very like a University. This University with an analogy which was appropriate to a democracy, resembled a department store. Had it been formed with imagination and less economy, the analogy might have worked. Eliot sought always the least force which would bring about any desired object. "With neither regret nor fear, he worked in the day for good ends which were often immediate but sometimes far distant." The distant ends were never gained. For a mind content, like his, to attribute a single cause to a single result will seek to reach a given end by a single given means and will not reach it.

The students were ungrateful to this estimable Perfectionist, who reduced the Parietal Regulations from forty pages to five. The estimable man, who had stepped out of the Rollo Books, tended youths in affliction, and told the poor how they should feed themselves. But the youths did not care what might happen in affliction, or whether or not the poor were told how to feed. The youths needed to be told how to feed their minds. Eliot thought that "society would never prosper so long as men were compelled to do things for which they were not created." The students knew how society is bankrupt if men are left ignorant of what they can do. They would have been content with the forty pages of Parietal Regulations if only their teachers had told them what to study, and how to think. They knew as well as Eliot that "there was more of a University in ten graduate students than in ten hundred youths who were taught in a college what they should have been taught in school." They knew as well as Eliot that they could not learn how to feed their minds from pamphlets of five or forty pages, or from systems of double-entry bookkeeping; but if a University was a society of learned men, a University could tell them. And Harvard was called a University.

Harvard was still a school. It was a big school, and was called a University because that was the old name for a big school. "Hold onto the old names. "Any common-sense man knows there is nothing like school-teaching to clarify a scholar's mind, that a University which does not teach, a professor who does not profess, or a president who does not preside, are nonsensical. But this schoolmaster, lenient to schoolboys, was a schoolmaster to teachers. Did Adamses call Cambridge a social desert? Eliot did not care. "A successful student devotes his evenings to work. Society should have no charm for scholars. A teacher wastes every hour he spends in amusement." All this is strangely savage. When Eliot went abroad, he enjoyed the society of wise men and laughed at Scotch jests until he cried. He himself had conferred with the former President, and with the best scholars, with carpenters, and fishermen, and he observed that "people who keep at work find it absurd to ask if life be worth living." Adamses were brilliant but superficial. What did Adamses want? He himself could drink upon occasion, but it had on him no effect whatsoever.

The Adamses were deliberately superficial. When Emerton said that "Eliot had changed the form when a change of spirit was needed," Emerton was vague. Vagueness and superficiality pointed precisely to one fact lying hidden beneath many surfaces. There was no University in Cambridge. The man on top, who could not recognize an acquaintance at ten feet because his own face had been from birth repellently disfigured, kept himself free from debts except a few of love and like a Ship's Captain, ate alone. He thought "his most essential quality was his capacity to inflict pain." Did he discourage the formation of a society around him, because without it he, the Anarch, was the more powerful?

His University was conducted openly. He himself lived, as it were, under a glass case, as though he were a perfect specimen in a moral museum open to the public for purposes of study without charge. But he disliked what he saw when he looked into himself. He did not do so often. For if one seeks to be conspicuously good, and finds oneself to be not as good as one should be, one thinks of oneself as being exceptionally bad. It is a natural form of conceit. For Episcopalian ladies to kneel down and in chorus call themselves miserable sinners, was shocking. His mother had said so. It was publicly indecent. But Eliot, walking humbly with God alone in his closet, was privately indecent. If he called himself "a mean, inadequate, cruel liar" he was helpless. He, the lonely savage, wrestling with good and evil spirits, with no help but nursery prayers.

Eliot was not the child of Emerson, he was the twin of Edward Everett Hale. Hale's way of looking "out and not in" is a very healthy antidote to the "See only with the inward eye" of the Theologia Germania. But the soul would always see into that which it looks out upon, and every soul must be trained to see. Eliot was trained no more than a savage. From religion or from science he sought only methods of power. "It is unreasonable to seek the meaning of any existence, of flower, beast, nation, man or God. Live innocently, usefully, happily, and leave the rest to Him." Eliot recognized that there is mystery. He was pious, but his piety was the piety of the savage. He did not impose any definition upon the mystery. He did not distinguish truth from commonplace. To leave education to God, though scarcely a sign of living faith in a University President, was all that a man of his character could do. "When a Unitarian ventures on positive definition, he finds himself on shakey ground. God is Progress. Hold onto the old names. Life is not always bright, but Religion should be." So the apostates of the King's Chapel had retained the Prayer Book with most of its old names. So did Harvard retain its old degrees with their old names, and both retained old names only for false sentiment. A few undergraduates, conscious of the fact that the Corporation were guilty, with however charitable intent, of accepting money under false pretenses, took matters into their own hands. Such students vindicate any system. The encouragement of anarchy is not pedagogy.

In his hourly struggle against the outer rules which were imposed upon others, Eliot cherished an inner rule which enabled him to conduct his dull life with zest and to protract it to a hale old age. In honoring him, the nation honored what is honorable in all our elders and betters — that they should hold the peculiar quality of every individual mind sacred to the community. Of this faith he was a saint. He was greater as a citizen than as a churchman. Yet as a churchman he was great. In abolishing compulsory chapel he staggered sacrilegious officialdom. Yet he feared and fought more than he did any Sectarian, all Governmental education. "It could not breed free men. What governments do in Europe, individuals must do in America, and that is the better way."

The estimable man privately supposed himself "to be pursuing ideals but feared that the present generation would think him only a successful Philistine." But they fed him with cake which he liked. His taste could not tell him that the cakes were not made of flour but of ashes. When he had eaten, he felt uncomfortable, and wanted to draw nearer to other people. The youths under his charge responded and he recoiled; whereas the boys he had grown up with were fully five years more mature than European boys, these boys who had grown up under him were five years younger than that. The good cause that "college should not compel a man to control himself by means which bear no resemblance to anything in after life" was failing. To have asked himself before fighting again, Is there not another way to fight? would have been for Eliot a sceptical pessimism almost cowardly. "Guides of opinion should never question the future." He had made up his mind what was right, and feared to speak or despaired to further no right save one. This pachydermatous optimist despaired of only one thing, and that thing was education. It was "impossible, for a university faculty to devise a collegiate course of study."

"If he had been compelled to require one study at Harvard, it would have been dancing." He was all for decorum, for it was clear to him that the common-sense basis of morals is manners. He was interested in morals, manners, decorum, being of them himself an example and living precept. Had he been interested in culture, his athletic mind would not long have wrestled against the fact that a University must be a society and that if it is not one, its economy is insoluble.

The age of graduation rose from 18 to 22, and organized athletics became a nuisance. Against these vices the President was powerless. He found himself a publicity man for a business men's pet hobby which they administered for him as though it had been some enterprise dependent upon advertizing. Men do not look forward to retiring in middle life, for in a new country, there is not promise of enough work to go around. The estimable 70-year-old man looked at the American men's sons. "The American boys from well-to-do families were rude in taste, trivial in thought, inarticulate in word, pampered from boyhood, impatient in study, frivolous in pleasure, and indolent in duty. If they were ever to prove successful men, they would have to devote three years of their youth to becoming open in countenance, reserved in friendship, uninfluenced by the vulgar breath, quiet in conduct, independent in thought, sustained in mind and steady in body." The prospect was not promising.

Suddenly he resigned. His last words to the college were: "Enlarge it still more and make it still greater. Good-night." Bigger and better, bigger and better. He was the first private citizen of the United States. The base of the walls on which he had set brick after brick had given way. He had identified 18th-century revolution with 19th-century progress and had given the blessing of a pantheist anarch to scientific business. He had identified the American culture with his Brahmin culture whose fruits, Harvard College and the King's Chapel, had drawn their nourishment from the Latin School. An office building occupied the site of the Latin School. The liberal college had proved as expert in unfitting youths for American business as the preparatory school had proved inept to fit boys for any sort of college.

In Harvard as in the King's Chapel a mob of isolated individuals sat under a leader of whom they required that he should make the desert bloom. And though the old leader would never see the Chosen People, reach the Promised Land, and though no new leader was in sight to lead them on from where he left them, his old eyes and ears remembered the thunderous words of promise. At ninety he must believe what he had believed at twenty. All would be well.

But he did not know what to do. There was a poet in him, as may be seen from his inscriptions, but he could not very well have written many more. Wisely he twice refused the invitation to hold a British Embassy telephone receiver, either for Republicans or for Democrats. But reform of the preparatory schools was exigent. Why did he not reform them? Why did he give up? He had developed an insatiable appetite for cake. He was large and hard but he was empty, and as he grew weaker he liked cake more and more and went all the way round the world to get it. But he took the same old interest in children's games and he kept his hands off Harvard. The new President asked for no advice so he gave him none. But he dreamed once that he was throwing rocks at picnickers with whom he could take no part. The new President talked a lot about small things and very frequently he used "the little word *must*." Eliot continued to repeat the big word *Freedom* and many other big words to the crowd in general. "He and Charles Francis Adams had begun life repeating these words. Adams saw reasons to abandon them. He did not." The Adamses were cultivated but decadent.

Before he died, he asked to see a baby boy and "to hold in his arms a life that was just beginning." Shortly he inquired if it would be convenient for all concerned if he should die on Saturday. He was only a little late in keeping his appointment. Did he, to whom an eternity of rest was repulsive, look on the Society of those who dwell in the Realms of Act with the same amazement that had been his when he visited the desolate hermit on the island of Monhegan?

John Wheelwright

LOOK AWAY, LOOK AWAY

I'LL TAKE MY STAND: The South and the Agrarian Tradition. *By Twelve Southerners. Harper & Bros.* 1931. $3.00.

This collection of essays, although written with no literary sequence, and by teachers, farmers, writers and critics, springs from a common conviction: we are harrassed by the great evil of industrialism which seduces us by standards that are morally and spiritually degrading. Through the uncritical exploitation of the applied sciences we have lost the dignity and joy of labor and have substituted, for the individual vocation and agrarian establishment, a mammoth hoax called progress. None of the essays are dull, although some are a little flat and repetitious. *The Hind Tit* is one of the more exciting in its rugged description of agrarian life. Mr. Lytle indulges in a virility of diction which is, however, at times overstrained and a little silly. I am inclined to think that the color and brilliance of the life he describes is applied from without and that the farmer would be amazed and bewildered if he could read the emotional significance with which Mr. Lytle has clothed his diurnal duties. *Reconstructed but Unregenerate*, by John Crowe Ransom is the most ably written article. Mr. Ransom is one of the most intelligent artists of contemporary American Letters and possesses an elastic, clear style which impregnates words with a fresh and brave meaning:

> "It is only too easy to define the malignant meaning of industrialism. It is the contemporary form of pioneering; yet since it never consents to define its goal, it is pioneering on principle, and with an accelerating speed. Industrialism is a program under which men, using the latest scientific paraphernalia, sacrifice comfort, leisure, and the enjoyment of life to win Pyrrhic victories from nature at points of no strategic importance. . . . Industrialism is an insidious spirit, full of false promises and generally fatal to establishments since, when it once gets into them for a little renovation, it proposes never again to leave them in peace. Industrialism is rightfully a menial, of almost miraculous cunning but no intelligence; it needs to be strongly governed or it will destroy the economy of the household."

It is not a difficult matter to disparage these essays as a weak literary nostalgia. The game these days is to build no worlds oneself and to destroy the attempts of others on the grounds that they are not "intellectually sound." And to be intellectually sound is to know today which way your neighbor will jump tomorrow. It is the person who has sold his mind and energy to the machine but whose spirit and emotional life is stunted and bitter who will dismiss this book. The authors should be congratulated upon taking any stand at all when stands are so out of fashion.

But the question is not so simple as these men would make it. And although they will doubtless defend themselves by saying that they have not tried to write a book on economics, it is only by doing so that their position will become valid. They would have the South left alone, that it might continue a way of life (which indeed is fast vanishing) where the centre of its civilization is the agrarian establishment and where there is a minimum of "progress." Their economy is sound if it were possible; but it is impossible. In spite of ourselves we are in the thick of an age where economic isolation is utterly unattainable. Before the Industrial Revolution the old manufacture of products was scattered throughout the country, each group independent and composed of its different necessary tradesmen and artisans. With the invention of the steam engine and electricity it was inevitable that industries should grow up near their sources of power and that raw materials at hand should be exploited and finished products commercialized more cheaply than the scattered villages could ever hope to produce them. The result of this is that our present civilization is based on industry and commerce and hence the development of an urban economy has grown up which is physically impossible to dispose of. But that is what the authors of *I'll Take My Stand* would do. Their bravery is admirable but I wonder if it is not misdirected. The direction of modern economy is not the will of an evil few whose intentions have been to enslave their fellow men, it is a universal phenomenon whose ultimate implications were inevitable by the middle of the eighteenth century.

Industrialism, the authors declare, has already proved itself a complete fiasco. The answer, according to Lyle Lanier in a spirited and vigorous attack, is that the production of commodities should be stabilized in each industry, and the large surplus of chronically unemployed should be induced by all possible means to return to agriculture. This is indicative of the reasoning back of several of the essays: it is emotionally praiseworthy, but it leaves out the physical aspects of the whole question. It is unreasonable to believe that an arbitrary segment of the population can be "induced" to return to an occupation which is not only, as Mr. Lanier says, "more than a process of production" but a way of life. Although the industrialized state is not working properly for the average individual, he is already so affected by it that he does not turn naturally toward agricultural pursuits as an economic and spiritual solution. He may not be convinced that industrialism is the road to heaven, but he stubbornly refuses to return to agriculture. Beyond this, however, the authors are irrational in attempting to stop a development which, in spite of its present difficulties and disorder, has not reached its cyclical climax. Even the least industrial and industrious Middle Tennessee farmer sacrifices his entire vocation to the intensive production of his tobacco crop which is his money crop. And no matter how many coöperative associations are formed to protect his "interest" and editorials written to curtail his production, at a half cent higher bid he turns traitor to his signature of one, and uses every means to out-produce his neighbor if he thinks his neighbor has given heed to the other. We cannot yet scrap the capitalistic network. And even when that day of revolution comes, I can see no logical grounds for the belief that the social and economic solution will be an agrarian establishment with the rehabilitation of the old individualism. The progress (if I may use that word only in its technical sense) of this world is probably of a different mechanics.

No matter what may be our individual tastes and inclinations, the complex of our civilization cannot be changed by a mere personal solution. It is fallacious to think of reviving an historical mode of life which has no spiritual significance for the majority of people, whose social and economic inheritance grows increasingly urban. It is not a matter of whether we want the South, or indeed the world, to become industrialized — we are sure we do not want it — but an evasion is useless.

If, in 1861, the South had succeeded in becoming a separate nation, the problem of industrialism would only have been prolonged. She could not have preserved her economic independence without international industrial competition. The economic and social questions today cannot be solved by any individual nation. They are the common problems of the entire world. And whether or not it is possible for the South to retain her historic identity, her best minds should exercise their creative thought, not so much in seeking a withdrawal from the rest of the world as in the attempt to develop a new genius to meet the social-economic problems which confront us. Certainly these problems cannot be abandoned for a provincialism, however pleasing.

THOMAS D. MABRY

THE FAILURE OF HENRY ADAMS

LETTERS OF HENRY ADAMS (1858–1891). *Edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.* 552 *pages.* $5.00.

The editor of these letters has seen fit (possibly through necessity) to limit his choice to letters addressed to six or eight close friends, and to end his volume, without a word of warning as to what came after, with the return of Adams from the South Seas to Paris in December 1891. The next twenty years, from 1892 to Adams' stroke in 1912, were the years in which he became the man whom most of us think of as Henry Adams. As the letters stand they do Adams, from our point of view, an injustice. It is to be hoped that at least a selection of the letters of the author of *The Education of Henry Adams*, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, and the essays posthumously collected as *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, will be permitted to clarify the letters of the young diplomat, journalist, teacher, politician, traveller, and historian, which are now given us.

The editor has a further sin on his soul, in that he has chosen not to edit what he has printed. His notes are nearly useless, being almost without exception limited to the extension of titles and names mentioned in the text. Adams' sole reference to his anonymous novel *Esther*, that it was written in heart's blood while he was living from minute to minute, receives no comment of any kind. How many of his readers does Mr. Ford think will know what *Esther* was or what it was about?

As a whole the letters do little to lighten the mystery of Adams' life and writings. At their best and most useful they furnish a diluted version of Adams' autobiography. This is not to say that the letters are uninteresting; but the interest is often only the interest of that which has provoked without satisfying the curiosity. The editor should have satisfied that curiosity; but he has preferred rather to increase the reader's suspicions by constant suspension points.

There is another point which the reader should keep in mind if he would not run wilfully at loss in the maze of misinterpretation.

Adams, in most of his early letters, was not writing seriously, with his whole mind; he did not attempt, on every page, to give conclusions to the matters in hand. He wrote in the moment and for the moment. Many times, when he dealt with important matters, he used only their slightest facets: his correspondents would know what he wrote of, because they knew what they had written to him. The poor reader is preserved in ignorance and can only guess.

But there is a pitfall in all social letters, let alone those of Adams, which Adams himself makes very plain in a letter to his brother in 1859. What he says of himself at twenty-one is just as true at fifty:

> What one writes is considerably influenced by the accidental state of mind at the instant of writing, and it is not strange if, among so many letters, when I am hurrying to put down the first thing that comes into my head, and fill out a sentence as quickly as possible, it is not strange, I say, if I say many silly things.

In his youth Adams wrote long letters to his brother Charles in order to find himself. In maturity he wrote long letters to Milnes Gaskell in order to keep the illusion of friendship. In middle age he wrote still longer letters to John Hay and Elizabeth Cameron in order to lose himself. What he wrote in old age is not here recorded. If *The Letters to a Niece* are at all suggestive, they suggest that he wrote to find life itself. The four ages of letters have at least one constant character: wit.

In any case, writing letters was for Adams a mode of social action. He wrote to those he loved in the terms of companionship, hardly ever exceeding, either in substance or style, the limits of good conversation. More serious matters, even if they prompted the letters, were left finally for other occasions and other modes. Hence, none of the letters, except those which are more travelogues than letters, is complete in itself. The illumination they shed on the writer's character is uncertain, is more mystifying than revealing. The reader must collate the letters with *The Education*, he must struggle and meditate and guess, he must put on omniscience, before he knows what either the letters or the autobiography meant. And he will most likely be wrong. But wrong or not, the reader will have learned something, which is what Adams would have wished.

We find in *The Education* ideas, events, emotions in finished form; in some instances the pristine form, comparatively weak and adulterate, may be observed in the letters. Then perhaps we have a key, which we may use as we like, to the difference between the thing as it merely struck Adams' mind and the thing when it had been made *part* of his mind. For example, there is the treatment of his sister's death from lockjaw. From the sickroom Adams wrote Milnes Gaskell five days before the death:

> Such a struggle for life is almost worth seeing. She never loses courage nor head. She knows what is the matter, and her own danger, but in the middle of her most awful convulsions, so long as she can articulate at all, she gives her own orders and comes out with sallies of fun and humourous comments which set us all laughing in spite of our terror at the most awful crises. . . . Habit has made even so horrible a disease as this, so familiar that we stroke and joke it. . . . As for me, I was at first a wretched coward but now I am hardened to the impressions and face a convulsion, with death beyond it, as coolly as my sister herself.

In *The Education* the emotion is completed, in three pages which will someday be embedded in the anthologies. A few sentences may be abstracted, to show the differences in quality:

> Death took features altogether new to him, in these rich and sensuous surroundings. Nature enjoyed it, played with it, the horror added to her charm, she liked the torture, and smothered her victim with caresses. Never had one seen her so winning. . . . Even the dying woman shared the sense of the Italian summer, the soft, velvet air, the humour, the courage, the sensual fulness of Nature and man. She faced death, as women mostly do, bravely and even gaily, racked slowly to unconsciousness, but yielding only to violence, as a soldier sabered in battle. For many thousands of years, on these hills and plains, Nature had gone on sabring men and women with the same air of sensual pleasure.

It may be the letter helps us understand the set-piece in the autobiography, but not much more than it helps us in reading *Adonais* to know that Shelley wrote of the death of Keats. It is much more likely that the converse is true, and that we understand the letter only in relation to the autobiography. The letter is given proportion incidentally. But most of all it shows how much Adams had grown between 1870 and 1905. The substance is the same, but it has suffered sea-change.

Henry Adams hid himself in the midst of American life from 1838 to 1918 with the greatest success. His published works, by which we know him, made his hiding the deeper and the more apparent, and what he did the more seductive and valuable. By instinct, he wrote and acted anonymously, or at most in the third person. Known and loved only by his friends, far from a public figure, he nevertheless impressed his character and his mind on a number of his countrymen which has but multiplied, as the impression deepened, since his death.

Born to public affairs by blood and circumstance, he had an imponderable, hidden, but enormous influence on public opinion and independent politics from the outbreak of the Civil War to the death of John Hay. During the administrations of Grant and Hayes and Garfield and Arthur, minus the time he taught history at Harvard to a certain extent, a good half the Cabinets met in his house. He invisibly engineered congressional investigations of the railroad and financial scandals of the seventies and published the results, in America when possible, in England when necessary. He edited the *North American Review* which had a circulation in the hundreds, a political influence on thousands. He worked for years to form a new party, for years to destroy Blaine and Butler. Like his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather, he was the true independent in American politics. But he lived at a time when independence was fatal out of office, and when office itself destroyed independence.

Because nothing came out right, because he and his friends were unable to gain their ends, he thought himself a failure, though he allowed Schurz and Hay, Lodge and Cameron, all the success they needed. But he was contented to think his political failure an important part of his education — gained at the expense of the country.

Society in the formal sense was of course open to Adams, and he made the most of it; he made friends — and let the rest of it go by the board: a feat most men find it impossible to perform. The possession of friends constituted social success, and Adams never lost a friend except by accident or death, so that in a personal way he might have thought himself a success.

But for Adams social success needed to be joined to a career — in his case, the career of literature and history — before the success was earnest. A less exacting spirit, or a man with a different vocabulary, might have taken his friends' word for it that fifteen volumes of history, at least two novels, a study of medieval history, and an autobiography, were enough credit for any one. Adams thought otherwise; and perhaps, since he knew what he wanted to do, he had the right to say whether he had failed. At any rate, failure and the confession of ignorance, as set forth in *The Education*, suited his style. It is a stupid paradox, but true, that for a man relentlessly honest, there is no failure like success; and Adams made the most of it for himself. For the rest of us the failure is either a mystery or a staring face in the mind.

But perhaps Adams was right. Perhaps it is just the fact that, so far as he thought, and so far as the public was concerned, he was only half a statesman, half a teacher, half a novelist, half a historian — if you like half a man, that made his influence so vast, so subtle, and so permanent. Certainly no American has so strongly, and yet so inobviously, affected his countrymen. He was something besides all his professions; and what he was, or what he failed to be, is his mystery.

The mystery is not impenetrable, is only comparative, and on that assumption one guess is as good as another. Most men stop growing at forty or fifty. Adams only began to grow after the bulk of his work was done. The sudden death of his wife in December 1885, when Adams was forty-seven, drove him to Japan with LaFarge the following summer. In Japan he looked for Nirvana, or so LaFarge told the young reporter. Whether he found Nirvana is doubtful; his nerves needed the medicine, and it is to be hoped he did; at any rate, it seems to have been during his travels with LaFarge, now in Japan and later in the South Seas, that Adams slowly matured and became — whatever it is that we, living after him, value in him most.

Here he ran true to type. With the accession of Jackson in 1829, John Quincy Adams became a failure, and for days together could think of nothing but a line from an old opera by Grétry: "*Oh, Richard, oh, mon roy, l'univers t'abandonne.*" Nevertheless, it was during the next, and last, twenty years of his life, as a mere congressman from Quincy, that the old President, fighting the right to petition, performed his greatest service. Old Adams lost the presidency, and by fate became a failure. His grandson lost his wife, and to the husband the personal failure was as great, and it took him longer to overcome it. Fifteen years passed, during which he filled his mind with thought and feeling, and opened his senses, prodigiously, to colour and line. The universe had abandoned him, and only after it had been lost could an Adams come to know it.

His knowledge he chose to put in three books, each of which accented, in a different way, the emotion of ignorance, the feeling of weakness, with which a man must be filled when he is confronted with the energy of history — either his own or that of the world. For, in collaboration with his brother Brooks, Adams had come to think that human history should be conceived as energy, and so as following the laws of energy set up in physics. It is curious that the religion and the art of the east and the middle ages, the bodies of women in Samoa, a vision of the Dynamo in the Chicago World's Fair, and the dramatic deaths which punctuated his own life, should have brought him to speculations apparently so abstract. But it is no wonder that with such emotional forces to deal with, he should have brooded on the image of man's failure until the thought of it was the stigmata on his own brow.

The story is set forth as speculation in two essays, *A Letter to Teachers* and *The Law of Phase;* it is the story of the failure of the energy, man, taken collectively. *The Education of Henry Adams* is the same story with a different form, the failure of the individual in a multiple society. *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* relates the failure of a society unified to the utmost in the name of the Queen of Heaven.

Most of us cannot afford to contemplate such failure; we are not strong enough and we fancy the world is as weak as ourselves. Failure for Adams was a necessary condition of life. At forty-one he wrote Lodge:

> The inevitable isolation and disillusionment of a really strong mind — one that combines force with elevation — is to me the romance and tragedy of statesmanship. The politician who goes to his grave without suspecting his own limitations, is not a picturesque figure; he is only an animal. . . . Gallatin was greater, because he could and did refuse power

when he found out what vanity it was, and yet became neither a cynic nor a transcendental philosopher.

That is the young Adams, writing of statesmen. At seventy-seven, in a letter quoted by J. T. Adams, he wrote to Henry Osborn Taylor. After speaking of the failure of moral supports and the religious hypothesis, he goes on:

> Are we, then, to go back to Faith? If so, is it to be early Christian or Stoic? . . . Marcus Aurelius would have been my type of highest human attainment. . . . I need badly to find one man in history to admire. I am in near peril of turning Christian, and rolling in the mud in an agony of human mortification. All these other fellows did it — why not I?

Adams had the right to fail. He had enough mind — enough force and elevation — so that thinking of him is like, to steal Thackeray's phrase, "thinking of an empire falling."

R. P. Blackmur

THREE BOOKS ON ART

ANCIENT PAINTING. *By Mary Hamilton Swindler.* 488 *pp. of text,* 16 *plates and* 640 *illustrations. Yale University Press.* 1929. $10.00. $5.00.

ANIMALS IN GREEK SCULPTURE. *By Gisela M. A. Richter.* 87 *pp. of text,* 236 *illustrations. Oxford University Press.* 1930. $10.00.

STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL PAINTING. *By Bernhard Berenson.* 148 *pp. of text,* 168 *plates. Yale University Press.* 1930. $15.00.

The latter nineteenth century produced some remarkable comprehensive views of history, where epochs were patiently reconstructed out of a gathered mass of evidence, as in Burckhardt, Mommsen, *La Cité Antique*, and, for the history of art, Berenson's little books on the Italian Painters. Our time seems to afford no such monuments of consideration. Do we lack the faith to throw our lives into some one long labor of learning? Do we lack the courage to draw conclusions? (After reading Spengler and Strzygowski I rather wish we did.) Or the prudence to draw the right conclusions? At any rate, we do not seem to lack patience, to judge by the learned monographs and compendia that are published all the time. Some of these compendia are as indispensable as dictionaries. They furnish the reader with enough evidence to reconstruct the past for himself. After all, a historian must either give you his view of the past, or else enough evidence to make your own.

Miss Swindler's *Ancient Painting* is such an indispensable compendium. The illustrations cover practically all that is left of painting from Altamira to the Vatican Virgil, and the text is an intelligently critical digest of all that has been written on the subject from the Greek and Latin writers up to last year's chemical analyses of pigments. All this must have taken years to gather and to synthesize. Since Miss Swindler has had the wisdom to avoid esthetic appreciations and the modesty to limit her task to sifting the researches of others, her book has the authority of a summa. One cannot overpraise the circumspection of her treatment of Greek painting, where nothing of the originals is left save possible adaptations on vases and Pompeian walls, and the dazzled vagueness of ancient rhetoricians. Miss Swindler's range of learning saves her from treating Greek art as generated *ex nihilo*, which every strict Hellenist feels in duty bound to do. The 700 illustrations are well chosen and clearly reproduced.

Miss Richter's *Animals in Greek Sculpture* is a charming collection of pictures, or rather, a collection of charming pictures, since the charm of the whole is disturbed by some unaccountable omissions. Where, for instance, is the stag from the old Apollo temple at Delphi? Where are the various tall grave stones of men toying with their dogs, especially the one in Athens of an old man feeding a grasshopper to his hound? Where is the lively metope of the Dioscuri rustling cattle from the "Siphnian" Treasury at Delphi? And where, above all, is the great Poros Bull borne down by Lions on the Acropolis, the most dramatic agony in all animal sculpture? I would not call Miss Richter to account for these omissions were it not that she has included so many coins and gems and Hellenistic waxworks that are small potatoes beside these great masterpieces of archaic sculpture. However, the book is a charming one for all that, and it publishes many small bronzes in American museums that deserve to be more widely known than they are. The text is perhaps less successful. It does not help us much to be told that a certain piece of sculpture is "very naturalistic" and another is "less naturalistic." Miss Richter gives some interesting quotations from Xenophon's treatise on hunting, and a little from Pliny's *Natural History*. I could wish that she had pushed her search a little farther. I would like to know what the Greeks thought of these animals they modeled. Did they, for instance, give a distinct character to each animal, as the Egyptians did to their Seth, Anubis, Thothe, etc.? Or did all the animals, in the beginning, stand for fertility? Why were certain animals sacred to certain gods, like the dove, goose and pig to Aphrodite? What governed the choice of animals to be sacrificed to each god? Doubtless some of these problems are as unanswerable as the song the Sirens sang, but I would have been pleased with an attempt to answer them, or at least with an awareness that they exist, and are worth answering were it possible.

Mr. Berenson's book is a collection of essays written during the nineteen-twenties. Mr. Berenson states his position by saying: "Our researches into the significance of medieval art are still preoccupied with gathering materials, and are still at the stage where the segregation of the single works from incoherent groups and the aggregation into coherent ones are the chief tasks." These groups determine the personalities of the artists, without which determination "there can be no humanistic study of the arts, as distinct from anthropology or psychophysiological aesthetics on the one hand, and, on the other, antiquarian and collector's gossip." The essays are so many demonstrations of historical method, demonstrations as varied and as expert in form as "Die Kunst der Fuge." Mr. Berenson's humility is as rare as it is touching, but it is devoutly to be hoped that he will not let it dissuade him from writing the great history that he alone could write, tracing art from Constantine to Giotto, from the death of form to its resurrection. Perhaps his promised book on Dugento Painting may give this to us by its implications. It would be a thousand pities if the fresh enthusiasm of his beginnings that produced the classic *Italian Painters* were not to have as pendant some monument from this gathered erudition that is so rare in its awareness of the purpose of erudition.

A. Hyatt Mayor

COWPER

The Stricken Deer, or the Life of Cowper. *By Lord David Cecil, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company*, 1930. $5.00.

A talented young American critic recently published a review of this volume which began with the remark that he found it "a very difficult problem" why anyone should want to write a Life of Cowper at all. The statement is an interesting commentary on the present condition of American criticism. It represents, one fears, what is coming to be more and more a characteristic of the American critical mind — a dry, marrow-less reaction to that other, more prominent, feature of our national character which is expressed in the works of Gene Stratton Porter and the adventures of Little Orphan Annie. We are afraid of any emotion lest it degenerate into sentiment: consequently what we cannot analyze intellectually we reject. A palate satiated with chocolate and marshmallows will develop an almost pathological fondness for dry biscuits, and one fears that anyone who cannot see a reason for writing a Life of William Cowper has lost, at least temporarily, his critical taste.

For though Cowper's poetry may seem tame or even stale, and we, unlike the heroines of Jane Austen, can no longer be "almost driven wild" by the beauty of his lines, the circumstances of his extraordinary history, especially when told as admirably as Lord David Cecil tells them, should not fail to move us. Probably no other life of which we have a full record gives so vivid an impression of the desperate injustice of the human situation, or sets so clearly against a background of nightmare, the qualities in human character which ennoble it. It makes one angry that an intelligent critic can think it "very difficult" to find anything interesting in such a life, and it makes one angry that a book which so admirably describes that life should be dismissed with the wave of what is, metaphorically speaking, an artificial hand. We cannot produce tragedy in literature unless we recognize tragedy in life, and it is a gloomy sign of our emotional sterility that a life like Cowper's should be ignored.

But it is unfair to Lord David Cecil to use his excellent book, which is one of the very best produced by the modern school of biographers, as a text for diatribe. It deserves consideration on its own account. He begins with an acute analysis of the 18th century in which Cowper was submerged, and he tells, with just proportion and impartiality, the facts of Cowper's career; his physical deformity, the early death of his mother, his life of inaction, the first approach of madness, his recovery, in such dangerous psychological circumstances, and the outwardly tranquil but inwardly tempestuous events of the following thirty-five years. Cowper's retirement at Olney with Mary Unwin is made as vivid to us as if we had shared it ourselves; we see him playing with Bess, Puss, and Tiny, his pet hares, we watch the decorous games of battle-dore and shuttlecock in the evenings, we walk in the wilderness of Weston Underwood, and dine with the Throckmortons. It is not, of course, Lord David alone whom we have to thank for these vivid details — he has merely arranged the material in the poems and letters, which Cowper himself has so incomparably described. But it is done with skill, and Lord David has soaked himself in his material and made it his own.

He has, indeed, largely overcome the chief difficulty which faces a biographer of Cowper. He has made the two sides of Cowper's experience, his quiet domesticity and his wild internal life of despair, seem as if they belonged to the same person. At first sight, it is almost incredible that the man who wrote so urbanely, so delightfully, with such exquisite polish and taste, to William Unwin, who watched with eagerness the lovemaking of goldfinches, and delighted in the company of rabbits, should have believed himself the one human being whom God had irrevocably damned. The tranquil surface rarely allows the black foundation to be seen; though his letters and poems are frequently suffused with a gentle melancholy, only once, in Cowper's unique great poem *The Castaway*, can we feel the force of that horrible conviction which had become the bed-rock of his emotion. Cowper himself once expressed wonder that a "sportive thought" should ever knock at the door of his mind, "and still more that it should gain admittance. It is," he continues, "as if harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state." And we, who can have some inkling of what that gloomy chamber was like (unless we consider with the reviewer above referred to, that Cowper was "altogether a mild thing") share Cowper's wonder.

The explanation is, as Lord David suggests, that Cowper welcomed any distraction; that he made an art, as his century allowed, and as no other century would have allowed, out of the trivialities of daily existence, dwelling on them with as much attention as possible, and shaping them into delicate prose or carefully thought verse. If he had not made this escape, his sense of despair would not have remained, as it so fortunately did, passive through most of his life, and he would have endured forty, instead of seven, years of violent insanity. He had sufficient mental vigor, unlike most obsessionists, to bring the external world into his consciousness, and it is perhaps because the things he paid attention to were apparently of so little importance that they gave him a refuge from what his belief taught him was more important than anything else. He saved himself by immersion in the commonplace, and it is the definition of his vitality that he has made, for us, the commonplace interesting.

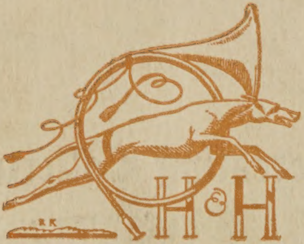
But fascinating as Cowper's life is for its own sake, it has also a historical significance which we should not ignore. Cowper, in his political, his moral and religious opinions was, I suppose, as much a creature of his time as it is possible for a man to be. But the circumstances of his life, his complete retirement from all active participation, enabled him to *feel* in a way that was fundamentally original. He has often been called a precursor of romanticism, and, in a narrow, literary sense, this is true. But in another sense, and it is in this sense that a biography like Lord David Cecil's is interesting — his life has a more profound prophetic value. Cowper's madness, his extreme sensitiveness, was the result of his inability to adjust himself to the God whom he considered the final criterion of reality. His God had abandoned him; the world, except country walks and the soothing touch of human affection, was fundamentally without any meaning but despair. Perhaps it is not far-fetched to use in such obsessions early, particularized examples of what was later to become, among the romantic poets, a melancholy with a more general application, and in our own day, though we think no longer of eternal torment, one of the truest definitions of our lives.

THEODORE SPENCER

68

THE *Summer* 1931

Hound & Horn



BAUDELAIRE, *an essay by* Charles du Bos

THE ICE HOUSE, *a story by* Caroline Gordon

RAINER MARIA RILKE, Part II, *by* Hester Pickman

THREE ELEGIES, *by* Rainer Maria Rilke

COW, *a story by* Moe Bragin

BALLET IN AMERICA, *a Chronicle by* Lincoln Kirstein

POEMS, *by* E. E. Cummings, Yvor Winters *and* Dudley Fitts

CHRONICLES - PHOTOGRAPHS - BOOK REVIEWS

Rec'd
JUL 2 1931
D.P.L.

Fifty Cents

CAN-DLE-LUXE SHOP
588 Madison Avenue, New York

* * *

Interesting Collection of
Glassware

Special Bohemian Pieces

French and German Pottery

Inexpensive Tile Tables

"Originators of
Monogram Match Packs"

We specialize in superior quality
candles at low prices

THE HOUND & HORN is published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, by THE HOUND & HORN, INCORPORATED. Publication Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Executive and Editorial Office, 545 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. Single copies, 50 cents; subscriptions, one year $2.00, two years $3.50; Canadian subscriptions, one year $2.25; two years $4.00; foreign subscriptions, one year $2.50, two years $4.50. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Concord, New Hampshire, under the act of March 3, 1879.

R. Wilhelm's
CONFUCIUS AND CONFUCIANISM

A standard study, containing an English version of Confucian texts selected to form an anthology of the philosophy and religion of Confucius.
$1.75

Constance Rourke's
AMERICAN HUMOR

"An admirably thought-out book, of first rate importance because it indicates how rich our 'traditional store' is." — *N. Y. Herald Tribune*
$3.50

André Siegfried's
ENGLAND'S CRISIS

"The most penetrating analysis of present conditions in England made by any foreign observer. He has found the weak spots in the English armour of tradition." — Sir Philip Gibbs $3.00

The Autobiography of
LINCOLN STEFFENS

"Deserves a place beside 'The Education of Henry Adams' as an American document." — C. Hartley Grattan, *The Forum*. "This book has something of the stateliness of prophecy." — *The Nation*
2 vols. $7.50

Carl Clemen's
RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

An authoritative symposium for the general reader by 12 eminent specialists in the field of comparative religion. "Destined to be a standard reference work." — *Survey Graphic*
$4.50

A catalog of books to be published in the Fall of 1931 will be sent on request to the readers of the HOUND AND HORN.

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY
383 Madison Avenue, New York

The New
Republic

A Journal of Opinion

Published weekly since 1914, The New Republic has presented the work of the leading American writers and of a distinguished group of foreign contributors. The insight and vigor of its editorials and general articles on politics and economics have made it one of the most influential American periodicals. Many readers in other countries find it a useful and interesting medium for keeping in touch with news and thought in the United States.

Editors

Bruce Bliven — Edmund Wilson
George Soule — Malcolm Cowley
Stark Young — Robert Morss Lovett

$5.00 a year; foreign postage $1.00 additional

13 WEEKS' TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION $1

THE NEW REPUBLIC
421 West 21st Street, New York, N. Y.
For the enclosed ONE DOLLAR send me The New Republic for 13 weeks.

Name..

Address...

H-H

In the heart of the Fox Hunting
Country of the Old Dominion

STUYVESANT
SCHOOL Warrenton
Virginia

Prepares for any College
Open Air Life
Especial Attention to Riding

A colored hunting print and historic map of the Old Dominion has just been prepared by the Alumni of Stuyvesant School and will be sent without obligation upon request.

Address

Edwin H. King, M.A., Headmaster
Warrenton, Virginia

Westminster
School

Simsbury, Connecticut

14 miles from Hartford

College Preparatory
and Junior Schools

Limited to 60 boys in Junior School. 100 boys in Senior School

●

Raymond Richards McOrmond, A.B.
Headmaster

HILLSIDE

For Girls

College preparatory, general high school courses. One-year intensive review for high school graduates preparing for college.

Overlooking historic New England town on Long Island Sound, one hour from New York.

Five charming dwellings, school house, gymnasium.

Outdoor sports. Riding. Salt water bathing.

Separate Junior School. Catalog.

Secretary
HILLSIDE SCHOOL
Box X
Norwalk **Connecticut**

NORTHAMPTON
School for Girls

Exclusively for College Preparation

Excellent Record preparing girls for the leading colleges for women. Regular four-year preparatory course. One-year intensive course for high school graduates.

NINE-ACRE CAMPUS
OUTDOOR SPORTS

Principals:
Dorothy M. Bement and Sarah B. Whitaker

Address Secretary

NORTHAMPTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
Box N, Northampton, Mass.

The Editors of
THE HOUND & HORN
announce for future issues:

MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHY (The Gifford Lectures)
by Etienne Gilson

ROMANTIC AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE, essays
by John Wheelwright

RUSSIAN ATTITUDES, an essay and a review
by Joseph Freeman

WALLACE STEVENS, an essay
by Richard P. Blackmur

TRANSLATION, an essay *by A. Hyatt Mayor*

HAMLET, an essay *by S. Foster Damon*

AMERICAN HUMOR, an essay and a review
by Lewis Galantiere

RADIGUET, HEMINGWAY and SCOTT FITZGERALD
by Lawrence Leighton

THE 1930 BAUAUSTELLUNG IN BERLIN, a chronicle
by Henry Russell-Hitchcock

WALT DISNEY and MICKEY MOUSE, a chronicle
by Kenneth White

GANGSTER, MUCK RAKER, ROUGH RIDER, an essay and a review *by Lincoln Kirstein*

POEMS, *by Merle Hoyleman, Howard Baker, R. P. Blackmur, Robert McAlmon, Horace Gregory, Allan Tate, Dudley Fitts, Kenneth White, Sherwood Trask, Gene de Bullet*

STORIES, *by Samuel Yellen, Sean O'Faolain, D. C. DeJong*

CHRONICLES · PHOTOGRAPHS · BOOK REVIEWS
DOCUMENTS

Torture Garden

BY OCTAVE MIRBEAU

Beside the pale productions of the million mildewed story-makers
gleams with awesome fire . . .”

A FRENCH bestseller for 32 years,
horror classic is now available for the first time in an unexpur-
ed English version. The Translation is by *Alvah C. Bessie*, who is
wn to readers of *Hound and Horn* as the author of the short story
We Are Barren.

The Critics Say:

book is hot with the fever of ecstatic, prohibited joys . . . it is as cruel as a
b-screw and luxuriant as an Oriental tapestry.”—*Florida Times Union.* “It set
cynically shivering with a new sensation.”—from the foreword by *James*
ker. “It crystallizes to a glittering spear of horror . . . beside the pale productions
e million mildewed story-makers it gleams with awesome fire.”—*San Francisco*
. “A million Europeans have read *Torture Garden,* and a million or so Americans
bly are going to read it.”—*Ohio State Journal.* “I defy anyone with any taste
he bizarre in literature to begin it and not finish it.”—*Charles Hanson Towne.*
puts it down with a sense of having witnessed the spirits of Poe, De Quincey
Ambrose Bierce dancing a devil’s czardas in the flames of Dante’s Inferno.”
Francisco Argonaut.

Illustrated $2.50

CLAUDE KENDALL

70 Fifth Avenue, N. Y.

NATIVITY

2

(an american quarterly)

❦

includes: ***Harry Kapustin, W D Trowbridge, Bruce Brown, Eleanor Hammond, Louis Zukofsky, Albert Halper, Solon R Barber, Gale Wilhelm, David C DeJong, Jack Conroy, John C Rogers, Leon Dennen, Louis Berg, Milton Farber, Eugene Joffe, Louis Mamet, Eva Pratt, Martin Moriarty, Harry Roskolenkier, Frederic Cover, Norman Macleod, A E Clements, Loyd Collins, Alexander Godin, Hugh Hanley, Boris J Israel, Paul Claude***

is edited by *Boris J Israel* with the aid of a group of Associates including *Norman Macleod, Alexander Godin, A E Clements, Harry Roskolenkier*

is distributed at one dollar and twenty five cents ($1.50 foreign) for the year, or thirty five cents (40 outside north america) the single copy, from

❦

1414 Madison Avenue
Columbus, Ohio

Guts and Humor

NEW MASSES

is the kind of a magazine that can provoke a subscriber to write: "It is the only live rebel sheet in this pot-bellied land of ours."

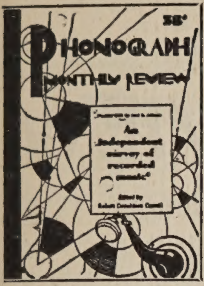
Each Month

SHORT STORIES — ARTICLES — POEMS — BOOKS — CINEMA — THEATRE — WORKERS ART — *and cartoons and drawings by more than 20 leading American artists.*

Among the writers, a young new group from the mines, mills and factories producing a new vital literature in America.

15 cents
Subscription $1.50 a year
Foreign $2.00

NEW MASSES
112 East 19th Street
New York, N. Y.


The Phonograph Monthly Review
An independent survey of recorded music

$4.00 a year
($5.00 outside the United States)

A specimen copy will be sent on request

THE
PHONOGRAPH
MONTHLY REVIEW

An independent journal of phonography and other phases of sound reproduction, serving as a critical guide to the wealth of musical literature from Palestrina and the Elizabethans to Strawinski, Bartok, and the younger moderns, made available by modern processes of electrical recording.

May Features: NICOLAS SLONIMSKY analyzes Mussorgsky's influence on modern music; W. H. SELTSAM surveys the rich repertory of recorded speech and poetry (from Tolstoy, Bernhardt, and Terry to Shaw, Cocteau, and Joyce); GEORGE BRINTON BEAL examines the "film-voice appeal" of Garbo, Dietrich, and others; FREDERICK BETZ points to a Bruckner renaissance.

June Features: BEN DRISKO outlines the problems of sound reproduction and advances suggestions for the correction of acoustic deficiencies of most electrical phono-radios; RÉNÉ LÉVY contributes a Paris Letter; GEORGE BRINTON BEAL analyzes Chevalier's microphonic technique; R. D. DARRELL diagnoses some present ills of the phonograph industry.

BOX 138, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

REPRINTS FROM THE HOUND & HORN

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT, *by* Varian Fry. 10 *pages.* $.25 EXHAUSTED

PIERRE THE AMBIGUOUS, a critique of Herman Melville's work, *by* S. Foster Damon. 12 *pages.* $.25

FORTY DAYS, *a poem by* John Wheelwright. 13 *pages.* $.25

T. S. ELIOT, *by* R. P. Blackmur. 56 *pages.* $.75 EXHAUSTED

THE ODYSSEY IN DUBLIN, a discussion of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, *by* S. Foster Damon. 39 *pages.* $1.00 EXHAUSTED

These monographs, bound in red and most attractive in format, employ the same type and the same paper as is used in the magazine.

Address THE HOUND & HORN, 545 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Or your Bookseller

"horriblement tendancieuse"

THE NEW REVIEW

No. 3—August, September, October—No. 3

Kotik Letaev	Andrei Biely
How to Write a Novel	Miguel de Unamuno
Leonardo, or the Problem of Art	Leo Ferrero
Post-Mortem of Faust (Poem)	George Reavey
Neo-Plasticisme, or Elementarist Art	John Xceron
Some Limitations of English	Basil Bunting
Choreography for an Aquarium (Poem)	Robert Heming
Onan, or Love Is Born Perfect	Michel J. Arnaud
The Bankruptcy of the Unconscious	Emmanuel Berl
Return to the Vestry (Poem)	Samuel Beckett
Lord Patchogue	Jacques Rigaut
Tragedy in Blue (A Novel)	Richard Thoma

THE NEW REVIEW is an International Notebook for the Arts, published quarterly from Paris. Edited by SAMUEL PUTNAM, with whom are associated EZRA POUND, MAXWELL BODENHEIM and RICHARD THOMA. Publication and Editorial Offices: 42 bis, rue du Plessis, Fontenay-aux-Roses, Seine, FRANCE. American Distributors: The Gotham Book Mart, 51 West 47th Street, New York. 60 cents the number, 2 dollars the year. All subscriptions received before June 1, 1931, will be good for 6 numbers.

Experimental Cinema

For Workers Films!
Against Reactionary Movies!

Your support will help build the first Workers Film Movement in America

Mail in your subscription Now!

EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA will continue the publication of contributions on the Theory and Practice of the Revolutionary Cinema by Moussinac, Belazs, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Flaherty, Trauberg, Reisman, Attasheva, Bond, Munzenberg, Dobb, Dreiser, Pilniak and others

EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA

Edited by: David Platt
Lewis Jacobs + Seymour Stern
European Corr. Leon Moussinac
USSR Corr. P. Attasheva

Eastern Office:
302 EAST 59th STREET
NEW YORK CITY
Western Office:
1324 N. NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE.
Hollywood, Cal.

Domestic — $2.00 for 12 issues
Foreign — $2.50 for 12 issues
25c a copy

THE HOUND & HORN

calls to your attention some articles in back numbers which you may have missed:

A Four Page Note on Strawinsky's OEDIPUS REX, by Roger Sessions. Volume I, No. 3

T. S. ELIOT, by R. P. Blackmur. Volume I, Nos. 3 and 4

LEONARDO AND THE PHILOSOPHERS, by Paul Valery. Volume IV, No. 2

PICASSO'S METHOD, by A. Hyatt Mayor. Volume III, No. 2

SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT HUMANISM, by T. S. Eliot. Volume II, No. 4

THE ODYSSEY IN DUBLIN (Joyce's *Ulysses*) by S. Foster Damon. Volume III, No. 1

CANTOS XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, by Ezra Pound. Volume III, No. 3

HENRY ADAMS, by Louis Zukofsky. Volume III, No. 3 — Volume IV, No. 1

THE DIAGHILEV PERIOD, by Lincoln Kirstein, Volume III, No. 4

50c a copy Postage Prepaid

Address

THE BUSINESS MANAGER
545 Fifth Avenue
New York City

morada

6

published in three languages by Donal McKenzie from Villa les Collettes, Cagnes S/mer, France

edited by
Macleod & McKenzie

Gerhardt Pohl
James T. Farrell
Georges Linze
H. R. Hays
Eduouard Roditi
Harry A. Potamkin
Joseph Kalar
Františ ek Halas
I. M. Lange
Hans Georg Brenner

+

American editor:
Norman Macleod
Box C
Old Albuquerque,
New Mexico, U. S. A.

Two dollars a year
Fifty cents a copy

FRONT

4

Will be published in five sections:

ORIENTAL
HISPANOAMERICAN
RUSSIAN
AMERICAN
EUROPEAN

edited in order by Ikeda, Abril, Fosp, Macleod and Prins.

No. 3

Published: Kawano, Mariyama, Polonski, Maiakovski, Bunting, Herbeit, Nizan, Elka, Muensterer, Reinhardt, Scheer, Abril, Dos Passos, Kalar, Vogel, Maddow, Spector, Rogers and Potamkin.

In English, German and French.

American editor:
NORMAN MACLEOD
Box C, Old Albuquerque,
New Mexico, U. S. A.

Administration:
N. V. SERVIRE
15 Reitzangerlaan
Hague, Holland

$2.50 a year
Seventy-five cents a Copy

In

The VIRGINIA QUARTERLY

for July

San Martín and Bolívar.........*Waldo Frank*

The Case of the American Woman
Edna Kenton

Europe Faces the Customs Union
Robert C. Binkley

Picasso and Others..........*Samuel M. Kootz*

The Letters of George Gissing..*Morley Roberts*

Reconstruction—New Style.........*Silas Bent*

Once Again. A Story..........*Elmira Grogan*

Poetry by *Conrad Aiken, Frederic Prokosch, Geoffrey Johnson*

Other Articles *Book Reviews*

"Your publication is really admirable; I congratulate you on it."

ALBERT JAY NOCK

75 cents a copy ⸗ ⸗ *$3.00 a Year*

The VIRGINIA QUARTERLY REVIEW

University, Virginia

The GOTHAM BOOK MART

51 WEST 47 + NEW YORK
BRyant 9-5874

Specializes in . . .

FIRST EDITIONS, BOOKS on ART & the THEATRE

SPRING BARGAIN LIST READY

Sole American agents for the leading magazine of modern letters published in Paris, edited by Samuel Putnam.

The NEW REVIEW

CATALOGUE V — *Spring 1931*

Contains another selection of Modern First Editions, including some very desirable American High-Spots, mostly in pristine state.

BENJAMIN HAUSER

60 East 42 Street New York City

Manuscripts criticized by experienced editor at small fee. For particulars write to

The HOUND & HORN

545 Fifth Avenue New York, N. Y.

Letters will be forwarded

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912,

Of the Hound & Horn published quarterly at Concord, N. H., for April 1, 1931.

State of New York, County of New York

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Lincoln E. Kirstein, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the President of The Hound & Horn, Incorporated, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, The Hound & Horn, Incorporated, 10 East 43rd St., New York, N. Y.; Editor, Bernard Bandler II, 1 West 81st St., New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor, Lincoln E. Kirstein, 506 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, Mass.; Business Manager, Alan M. Stroock, 375 Park Ave., New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: The Hound & Horn, Inc., 10 East 43rd St., New York, N. Y.; Mr. L. E. Kirstein, 506 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, Mass.; Mrs. L. E. Kirstein, 506 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, Mass.; Mr. Lincoln E. Kirstein, 506 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, Mass.; Mr. Bernard Bandler II, 1 West 81st Street, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

LINCOLN E. KIRSTEIN,
Managing Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 3rd day of April, 1931.

Harry Mandelbaum, Notary Public
(My commission expires March 30, 1933.)

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. IV, No. 4
July-September, 1931

CONTENTS

Comment: The Case of the New Republic 457

Charles Baudelaire, an essay by *Charles du Bos* 461

On a View of Pasadena from the Hills, a poem by *Yvor Winters* 498

The Ice House, a story by *Caroline Gordon* 502

Retreat, a poem by *Dudley Fitts* 511

Rainer Maria Rilke, Part II, an essay by *Hester Pickman* 512

Cow, a story by *Moe Bragin* 556

Two Poems by *E. E. Cummings* 569

Correspondence

Costa Piu Della Divina Commedia *Ezra Pound* 571

CONTENTS

Chronicles

Dance, on Ballet in America *Lincoln Kirstein* 573
Film, on F. W. Murnau *Kenneth White* 581
Architecture, on Masterpieces of American Building *John Wheelwright* 585

Book Reviews

"La Jeunesse du Peintre El Greco," par J.-F. Willumsen
"El Greco," von August L. Mayer
"The Birth of Western Painting," by Robert Byron and David Talbot Rice
"Men of Art," by Thomas Craven
"El Greco's Italian Period," by Ellis Waterhouse *A. Hyatt Mayor* 597
"A Monument to St. Augustine" *Fr. Peter Daniel Hughes* 602
"L'Influence du Symbolisme Français sur la Poèsie Américaine," par René Taupin *Yvor Winters* 607
"Axel's Castle," by Edmund Wilson *Allen Tate* 619
"New Found Land," by Archibald MacLeish
"Poems," by Robert Graves
"Adamastor," by Roy Campbell
"Ten Poems," by Kathleen Tankersley Young
"The Ecliptic," by Joseph Gordon Macleod
"Poems," by W. H. Auden
"Chelsea Rooming House," by Horace Gregory
"Epistle to Prometheus," by Babette Deutsch *Dudley Fitts* 625

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

The Editorial Comment in the Fall issue of THE HOUND & HORN will include a Symposium: John Dewey and his Friends.

Charles du Bos is the author of four volumes of critical essays, "Approximations", books on Byron and Gide, and a Journal. He is also one of the editors of *Vigile.*

Caroline Gordon (Mrs. Allen Tate) has published various short stories and is now writing a novel.

Father Peter Daniel Hughes is a member of the Franciscan Order.

E. E. Cummings' new volume of poems appears in the fall.

Moe Bragin received his Master of Arts degree at Columbia and is now teaching at a private school in Brooklyn. He has worked as a farm hand off and on ever since the war.

Copyright, 1931, by The Hound & Horn, Incorporated

THE HOUND & HORN is published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, by The Hound & Horn, Incorporated. Bernard Bandler II and Lincoln E. Kirstein, Editors. Alan M. Stroock, Business Manager. Publication Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, New Hampshire. Executive and Editorial Office, 545 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Manuscripts *must* be accompanied by a stamped return envelope. Payment will be made on publication.

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. IV, No. 4 July-September, 1931

COMMENT

FOR this issue, the editors of the HOUND & HORN had planned to consider the case of the *New Republic*. After examining a certain number of its recent issues, however, we were forced to admit that comment lay beyond our powers. It is therefore our plain duty to allow the editors of the *New Republic* to present their case in their own words by arranging extracts from their pronouncements* in recent numbers of the *New Republic* into the following symposium entitled:

ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT DILEMMAS

Mr. Josephson, *parliamentarily* — To recall our attention to the living issues of the time, from more habitual or pleasing matters, is a work that is imperative now and of supreme value.

Mr. Hallowell, *trenchantly* — We don't need an Ivy Lee to sell Communism to America: we need a New Republic to sell America to America.

Mr. Burke, *diffidently* — I am asking that we change human nature. And . . .

---

* Those who question the *intrinsic* accuracy of this description are referred to the pages of the New Republic.

Mr. Soule, *wistfully* — The younger generations not only did not believe in our ideas, but for the most part paid no attention to them; the more intelligent escaped to Europe, to sexual experiment, to egocentric psychological fads, to religion, to esoteric literary and esthetic expression or to irresponsible Menckenian cynicism. . . . This attempted education of ourselves and of others has for the most part been undramatic.

Mr. Burke, *reconsidering* — . . . us not attempt something so Utopian as the reshaping of human nature. . . .

Mr. Wilson, *diminuendo* — We have gone on making our complaints and proposals, but with a vigor which has tended to diminish in proportion as we became increasingly conscious that no one was paying attention to us.

Mr. Hallowell, *crescendo* — All you want that the Communists have, Mr. Wilson, is their élan.

Mr. Burke, *to himself* — Only if nationalization can be considered seriously do we have reason to consider seriously the equivalent of nationalization through. . . .

Mr. Josephson, *colloquially* — I wonder what many of these White Collars (who may soon be driven to celluloid, and who are growing down at the heel, now that they have been turned into the street) are thinking of?

Mr. Wilson, *acutely* — The brokers and bankers who are shooting themselves and jumping out of windows are disheartened by the precariousness of their profession — but would they kill themselves if they loved it?

Mr. Burke, *continuing* — . . . the equivalent of nationalization — the equivalent, but not the word. . . .

Mr. Hallowell, *waking Mr. Burke* — Americanize America!

Mr. Burke, *brightly* — No, Mr. Wilson makes the mistake that radicalism has always made in America. He would transplant Old World notions verbatim, without national adaptation. His position is analogous to the Communists' attack upon religion.

Mr. Soule, *scientifically* — People split on dogmas, but they must use common faculties so long as they practise scientific analysis and undergo conditioning by experience.

Mr. Josephson, *judicially* — The temper of Soule is scientific, experimental, educational, and not swayed by an emotional absolute; his view is broad and realistic, taking in ever so many obscure factors working in the economic body.

Mr. Burke, *categorically* — Certainties may be used as expedients, if they are expediently applied — but the theoretical end must be the renunciation of all certainty. . . .

Mr. Hallowell, *rousingly* — George Soule's "Hard-boiled Radicalism" — At a glance I see that certain things I have tried to say here are infinitely better said by him. Magnificent — a crystal globe flung into the air. But cloistered cerebration, as usual. "What is required . . . is . . . more vigorous steps. . . ." Hell! What are they? Define them. *No, take them!*)

Mr. Burke, *enrapt* — . . . above brute faith, upon native inspiration, upon love of conformity, we must erect indolence, sloth, the idle curiosity which appears at its best in the skepticism and inquiries of pure science.

Mr. Ginzburg, *realistically* — From an emotional point of view, it may seem almost criminal and morally cowardly, at a time when there are eight or ten million unemployed and perhaps hundreds of thousands starving, to advocate a policy of rational intellectualism.

Mr. Burke, *inspired* — Flags may still be needed to combat flags, but the triumph of the last flag should coincide with the triumph of flaglessness. If there is ever a millennium. . . .

Omnes — A dichotomy has appeared in liberalism, wherein its premises are opposed to what appears to be its logical conclusion.

Mr. Burke — This is a grim time for rejoicing — but it is good to know that an absurdity will finally become an absurdity, even by its own code of values.

Meditation on the Life of Baudelaire

"Soyez béni, mon Dieu, qui donnez la souffrance
Comme un divin modèle à nos impuretés,
Et comme la meilleure et la plus pure essence
Qui prépare les forts aux saintes voluptés!"

"My only way out of difficulties is by *explosion;*
Yet what living makes me suffer is unspeakable."
(Letter to his Mother; Xmas, 1861.)

"*Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs.*"

WE here propose nothing more than a meditation on the life from which the *Fleurs du Mal* sprang. Former critics have considered the work alone, by itself, in order to evaluate it and to win for it the place it deserves, and thanks to them that place is for all times won. Today Baudelaire's life no more needs apology than does his work: everywhere unbared, spread out before our gaze like some gigantic wound, no centurion's lance can any longer threaten it. Yet on contemplating it we receive so many lessons, so pure and so urgent, that it becomes our duty to gather them in. We would show that although the *Fleurs du Mal* could have grown in a sense only from such a life, yet that it nevertheless remains a miracle that they did so grow from it, and we would show that they grew from the life in spite of it, through a triumph, not of the will, this time, but of the most hidden and inalienable prerogative of the spirit. Baudelaire's case shows more clearly than any other how, in the hidden foundations of moral life and practice, every "because" carries an "in spite of", and every incentive a corresponding inhibition. No man ever more exactly deserved Joubert's maxim: "I have no strength except a certain incorruptibility."

When Baudelaire's letters to his mother were published in 1918, the *Fleurs du Mal* appeared for the first time against their proper background. The mass of evidence in Crépet's two collections, and the insistent gloom of the letters to Poulet-Malassis and Ancelle had indeed already opened a crack of unbearable bleak and blank light, but this time the whole room is disclosed and each angle of sordidness brought out. These letters might be called *Ma Vie Mise à Nu* and set up as a diptych against *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu*, since they further deepen the pit from which that last cry rises.

2

But we must realize that Baudelaire's plight is really not unique. Life was just such a problem for many another great artist. Yet in Baudelaire's case we can neither blame the events nor the actors nor any of those jangled instruments that life plays on so harshly, since his supreme tragedy is this, that even if life had set out to give him everything, it had nothing to offer that his disposition could take to. His originality took the dreadful form of a hatred for life that extended far beyond any of its contingencies, the bare spirit's absolute and incompatible hatred.

When such a feeling is found in its pure state, rising above any personal motive in an abrupt and ageless autonomy, it terrifies, like a lonely peak, blacking the valley. With most of us life deals even-handedly and brings us compensations, as Emerson loved to remark.

Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.

Even while life steals one by one our reasons for living, our successive centers of gravity, it at the same time, often unnoticed by others, almost always unnoticed or at least unrealized by us ourselves, replaces them with those petty satisfactions that solidify a person and enable him to pass from yesterday to tomorrow,— those hidden props to so many lives that seem to have nothing left them. Now Baudelaire was congenitally unable to feel these petty satisfactions; his whole being flung them savagely off. I have heard Baudelaire shrewdly called lean; if this means the man and not the artist, then how profoundly true! Baudelaire was indeed lean in the sense that nothing in him functioned as a circulatory system. He never knew any normal vegetative life, any of that well-being diffused throughout the body by a medley of feelings of which no single one rises clearly to consciousness. He knew vegetative life only in the form of dreaming, of such ever brooding meditation as produced the Sibyls of Michelangelo, Dürer's Melancholia, some tones of de Vigny and so many of the *Fleurs du Mal*. Baudelaire's sole contact with life itself came through his nerves, forever unbared and rasped upon. When we read his letters the same anguish grips us as when we see the trembling and chilly twigs that winter whips with wind.

3

"Greatness does not show itself in pushing to any one extreme, but in straddling opposites and filling all the middle ground." Pascal was here treating of virtues; but whatever the point his mind bore upon it, thereby became the center of a circle embracing all human experience. The extremes must here be taken as height and depth, without, however, restricting these terms to an exclusively moral sense, and their deviation is determined for each man by his character; the middle ground, on the contrary, is furnished us by life itself, and it becomes our task to "fill" it. But how fill what you have not got? Baudelaire has neither Pascal's middle ground, nor the middle ground of life, so that most men's normal state is spiritual death for him. Seen from without, the vegetative life may seem a mere doze, but the man who gives himself up to it feels nothing consciously but the vague fulfilment of repose. Baudelaire knew every form of laziness and idleness, but through them never attained repose. His disposition could not bear the very repose he longed for, whence the all powerful nostalgia of the *Fleurs du Mal* and its wide archangel wings.

Under some form or other, the middle ground of normal life protects men of genius from their genius itself; they regather their strength in a kind of anonymity, which armours their originality, frees it only at its season and takes charge of the interim. This interim, if prolonged, will kill the artist, but often it saved him simply by keeping the man alive. Now I think no mind was ever made up more exclusively of originality than Baudelaire's, by which I mean more incapable, not only of any expression, but of any way of thinking or feeling that does not bear his personal stamp. He shares this complete lack of anonymity with Constant and Stendhal, the only two recent Frenchmen whose originality seems to me to equal his, but with both of them life by turns attracting or paining them or rousing their curiosity, also stimulated their action, that is, released the intellectual activity that eases originality merely by exercising it. Baudelaire's thought certainly fed on all appearances (few men reflected the spectacle of life so profoundly) but life itself never sufficed to make him act; this is where his originality turned against him and showed itself so murderous, not only by giving him no rest, but by answering no outside appeal. His originality obeyed no commands except those itself laid down.

Now life, whether assimilated or rejected, knows how to impose its middle ground, and torture the man of genius who refuses to admit its plea, as Baudelaire's letters inexorably show. Already at eighteen he wrote thus to his mother:

> "I am worse than I was at school. There I did little in class, but at least I did something, and later, when I was dismissed, that shook me, and I still did a little something for you — but now *nothing*, *nothing at all*, and it is no pleasant indolence, nor poetic, no indeed, but sulky and silly . . . At school I worked now and then, read, wept, sometimes got angry, but at least I lived. Now not at all. As abject as can be, swarming with faults and no longer with pleasing faults. If only at least this painful sight drove me to change violently, but it doesn't, and of all that spirit of activity that drove me now towards good and now towards evil, I have nothing left, nothing but indolence, sulks and boredom."

Except for the word "silly", by which Baudelaire anticipated what he dreads he might become (although he is one of the very few men who never passed through silliness), the first stage of his malady is already complete. Later we shall track the roundabout ways by which he regains his "spirity of activity", though never rejoining it directly, since he lacked any category of the "given": in one sense he always had to start off from nothing, which multiplied a hundredfold the difficulties of the start, that every self-respecting writer feels. Thus this somber portrait darkens and is increasingly more loaded by the very lifelong growth of Baudelaire's spirit. Each essential element of his exceptional genius brought with it a devastating force, each one sufficient to batter down the whole. If incorruptibility had not been both Baudelaire's inalienable privilege and his essential virtue, we would have neither the *Fleurs du Mal* nor the *Spleen de Paris;* but to maintain this incorruptibility and through it to rescue his work, he was driven to destroy himself. May I be forgiven for insisting on this point that is the sole reason for writing these pages?

Baudelaire's fundamental and constant aim, pursued through thick and thin, was what he liked to call the "perfecting of his spirit". In time that spirit became an infallible instrument, as incapable of error as most of ours are of truth. Even in youth Baudelaire had a high faculty for judgment, which developed until, during the last fifteen years of his life, it seemed to work independently of his own will, so that the spirit could not err even though the man might wish it to. I know no more impressive intellectual sight than this unswerving judgment that looks down from ever higher upon a life irrevocably condemned. At Brussels he was obsessed and torn by the weight of abandonment by hearing nothing from the book shop upon which his whole uncertain future depended, by piercing sickness, by utter inability to work and by a frightful thirst for vengeance, and yet he could write thus to Sainte-Beuve in 1865:

> "I have re-read the Salammbo article and the reply. Our good friend is certainly right in seriously defending his dream. You were right in laughingly making him aware that it is not always wise to be too serious, but you seem, in places, to have laughed a little loudly."

No more need be said, and what an earnest and saddened ring! Could a lapse be more tactfully and delicately pointed out to an elder who is a friend in spite of everything? French poetry has no greater nor more scrupulous artist than Baudelaire who thus wrote to Poulet-Malassis, at the time when the *Fleurs du Mal* were in the press:

"You yourself once owned to me that you thought, as I do, that in every kind of creation, nothing was worth considering but perfection."

Baudelaire gave ear to every objection, which he would scrupulously weigh, and welcome if he found it the least bit justified, even though it came from men he otherwise despised. From a friend he solicits criticism: "My note on Revolt is loathesome, and I wonder that you did not call me down for it." He was tireless in retouching, and never let go of anything, whether the most sustained poem or some simple note whose perfection lay in absolute exactitude, unless he had first brought it to the highest polish he thought it could stand. And yet the work of art was never all in all for him as it was for others; for him technical perfection was not an end in itself, but a mere evidence of the essential perfection of the spirit. On this score Baudelaire deserves Paul Bourget's acute remark on Leonardo, both being alike in "slow preparations, deep reflection, and works of art that are means for study rather than ends in themselves, laps in intellectual exploration and opportunities for the progress of thought."

Although Leonardo, and later Goethe, found their salvation in this "progress of thought", nevertheless they sought it through creative activity. Leonardo called painting, *cosa mentale*, and would have said the same of everything, and yet, as Valéry remarks, "he comes back to reality without effort, models a horse as a handsome and thinking animal in its lithe relaxation, able to gallop or leap or swim, changing gaits upon its rider's slightest hint, and with a wise nimbleness." If Goethe seems at times too willing to nod with Homer, be sure that that master of wisdom, whose life is a matchless treatise on intellectual economy, knew perfectly well what he was about, and what awakenings he was preparing. Spiritual perfection, when left to itself, is anything but an incentive to creation, and unless it is allied, as in Joubert, with a very special constitution, with that seldom bound aptitude for spiritual happiness whose experiences are distilled drop by drop in the *Pensées*, it becomes, as with Baudelaire, the most subtle and ingenious instrument of torture. The perfection of Joubert's spirit has the fullness and bloom of fine fruit; Baudelaire's has the sharpness of the double edged sword whose name he bore, a sharpness never sheathed; let a mist arise, such as those that the very act of creation gives off, that are dangerous, but also blessed because they give the strength of keep on, and instantly this sword is on it, cuts it off and re-makes the void. In Baudelaire's mind every mist corrupts, not only those rising from the world, but even those that his own genius might be tempted to secrete.

If only this "perfecting of his spirit", to which all is subordinate, could find a free field for its exercise. But no, a first comer has already seized the field, the "leaning for dreams." These day dreams, which were finally to give France a poetry not unworthy of English poetry, appear to us only in their apotheosis in the *Fleurs du Mal*, but our gratefulness demands that we confront them with their origins. Twenty years of the most tragic experience lay behind Baudelaire when he wrote: "Immediate work, even though bad, is better than day dreaming." "I shall not tell you my fearful struggles with myself, my despairs, my day dreaming." Baudelaire undoubtedly expanded into his vast boundaries through his immense and complex dreaming, so rich and searching, and it is thence that he brought up those never ending lines, those strophes that exhaust man's breath, that swell as strong as tides, and whose organ shudderings are pierced by the sharp delights of fifes. But before reaching that result, dreaming had poisoned him with a "hideous lethargy"; his "mind is absolutely lucid" and his "ideas are forever active", and yet the drug takes quick effect, for "the immensity of dreaming soon swallows a man" and its corrosive strength is intensified by the obsession of the irreparable past, which haunted Baudelaire more destructively and more awesomely than any man. On this his word is final: "The thought of the past strikes mad." The illness grows by mere duration, and yet during its growth the victim enjoys a matchless bliss:

"Oh bliss! What we usually call life, even in its happiest unfolding, is nothing to this supreme life now revealed to me, which I sip minute by minute, second by second. No, minutes have ceased longer, and so have seconds, for time has foundered and there reigns an everlastingness of delight."

And now the awakening:

"But a dreadful knock has struck the door, and I feel as though, in some hellish dream, a pickaxe had struck my stomach.

"And there the Spectre stands: some constable who comes to rack me in the name of the law; an infamous concubine who comes to whine and unload the pettinesses of her life upon the sorrows of mine; or else it is some editor's office boy who demands the completion of a manuscript.

"The heavenly room, the idol, the mistress of dreams, the Sylph, as the great René called her, all that magic has flown at the Spectre's brutal knock.

"Horrible! I remember! I remember! Yes, this den, this prison of unending boredom, is indeed mine. This is my stupid, dusty, battered furniture, my cold hearth, fouled with spit, my sad window panes where the rains have guttered the dust, my manuscripts, scribbled over or unfinished, my calendar, pencil marked at sinister dates!

"And instead of the fragrance of another world enrapturing my perfected feeling, alas, I smell stale tobacco smoke, mixed with indescribable, nauseatous rottenness, the rancid breath of desolation.

"In this world whose closeness is packed with disgust, only one familiar thing smiles at me, my vial of laudanum, my old and frightful friend, lavish like every woman I have known, with caresses and betrayals.

"Ah yes, Time is back again, Time is now enthroned, and the hideous old man has brought his fiendish train of Memories, Regrets, Spasms, Fears, Agonies, Nightmares, Rages, and Panics.

"As Each Second ticks out of the clock it speaks thus: I am your life, most insupportably, implacably your life."

In all man's life one Second only is sent with good news, the *good news* that sets every man inexplicably to trembling.

Yes, Time rules and has caught back his brutal dictatorship, and drives me, like a beast, with his double goad: "Pull, ox. Sweat, slave. Live, and be damned." *

4

If only the lethargy vanished with the dream that brought it, but it does not, and the lethargic spell stays on, sometimes for months. On awakening he sometimes feels "a resignation worse than fury", but mostly fury itself, and rage (no word recurs so often in his letters); nothing is left of the day dream but its ravages, and it is easy to see why Baudelaire cries: "Ah, how I am disgusted, and have been so for years, with this having to live twenty-four hours every day. When shall I live with pleasure?" Lethargy and anger, such is the chasm from which these two unforgettable stanzas arise:

Quelquefois dans un beau jardin,
Où je traînais mon atonie,
J'ai senti comme une ironie
Le soleil déchirer mon sein;

---

* Le Spleen de Paris: "La Chambre Double". This poem throws light on his note in *Mon Coeur*, "While still a small child, two feelings warred in my head: the horror of living and the ecstasy of living. The state of an idle neurotic."

Et le printemps et la verdure
Ont tant humilié mon coeur
Que j'ai puni sur une fleur
L'insolence de la nature.

There would seem but one way out of such a state; through the will. No one knew this better than Baudelaire, who always judged himself so severely, and who was soon to show the deepest humility in *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu*. But here we must distinguish. Gautier noticed in him a "dogged will that backed his inspiration" and Baudelaire did indeed have a will such as few geniuses ever had, which we must oppose to the will to do by calling it a will to see, since it clings unshaken to every turn of inspiration, as incapable of compromise as it is of blindness. But although the will to see superintends all Baudelaire's ultimate work, it never, either with him or with anyone else, gives the first impulse, which always comes from the will to do. Now the will to see, because of the level on which it works, is not only unable to bring the will to do into play, but sometimes even obstructs it. The will to see just because it does foresee far ahead, because it beholds every detail of a work before a stroke has been done to make it thereby overwhelms some men with disgust, makes them feel that nothing is any use, as men are apt to whose device is Baudelaire's: "Spleen et idéal."*

---

* "For several months I have lain in one of those frightful languors that stop everything; I have not had the courage to touch the proofs that are piled on my table since the beginning of the month, yet a time always comes when I have to wrench myself, with dreadful pain, from this chasm of indolence." (Letters to his mother, p. 148.) "The page before was written a month, 6 weeks, 2 months, ago, I cannot remember when. I have fallen into a ceaseless nervous terror, with frightful sleep, frightful awakenings, and can do nothing. My copies lay a whole month on the table before I found courage to put them in envelopes."

"How hard it is, not to think a book, but to write it without weariness." (Letters to his mother, p. 319.) "I feel an immense discouragement, a feeling of unbearable isolation, an entire distrust of my strength, a total lack of desires, inability

Although only the will to see can give a work its eternal stamp, it makes the execution an inchmeal torture. ("How hard it is, not to think a book out, but to write it!") Time and again, Baudelaire shows that work was never a pleasure for him. In his closing years, moved by the wish to make good and by his increasing isolation, he wrote:

> "The great and single object of my life is work, the hardest and most boring thing in the world, which only habit can make bearable. I am a great culprit — to have wasted my life, my faculties, my health, to have squandered twenty years in day dreams, which puts me below the herds of boors who work every day."

He wrote again, four months before the end:

> "I say to myself with a kind of terror: I must get used to working and make that churlish companion my only joy, for the time is coming when I shall have no other."

We must not be led astray in this respect by the haughty penetration of his "*Advice to Young Writers*" of 1846, for there Baudelaire's judgment of himself dictates a code from what he wished to be, not from what he was. The admirable axiom: "Inspiration is the sister of daily work" is indeed taken from his experience, but from his negative experience.

Baudelaire appears never to have had much will to do. He refers somewhere to the "varying treasure of the will", but his, like the small fortune he inherited, was squandered during the years of leisure through which his genius grew.

> "Ah, dear mother, have we still time for happiness? I no longer dare believe so: 40 years old, my money in trust, huge debts, and

---

to find any amusement whatsoever. The odd success of my book and the quarrels it has stirred up interested me for a while, and then I relapsed . . . I constantly ask myself, What use is this? What use is that? This is the true spirit of spleen." (Letters to his mother, p. 150, dated December 30, 1857, six months after the *Fleurs du Mal* were published.)

last and worst of all, my will lost, spoiled." Elsewhere he says: "I have sinned against myself. This disparity between the will and the faculty is more than I can understand." How was he to make hope from hopelessness, a will from slackness?

It is doubtful if the will to do in a man of such uncompromising superiority, can find sufficing reasons for acting in purely internal motives. Let me explain: in the last analysis, the will to do is always the most personal of creations. But the man whom vulgar incentives do not touch, who is strong in his incorruptibility and weak in all else, often requires an ideal or real stimulus to come from without and give him the courage to forge out his needed will. Whether he subordinates himself to a single love or to a high duty, his effort is inner, but the stimulus comes from outside him. Now Baudelaire never would consent thus to subordinate his intimate self to something greater than it and existing independently; and when at last he did consent his game was up, for sickness gripped him. "Too late, perhaps," is the death-knell that strikes across his last cries:

Loin des sépultures célèbres,
Vers un cimetière isolé,
Mon coeur, comme un tambour voilé,
Va battant des marches funèbres.

Baudelaire never begins by working; it takes the excess of his crisis to fling him into work. No one ever listened more to the "fiend of procrastination," and the following quotation seems to be his final statement in this matter:

"Then add to this suffering one which you perhaps will not understand: when a man's nerves are harassed by anxieties and suffering, then the devil, in spite of every resolve, slips into his head every morning in the shape of this thought: Why not rest for one day in forgetfulness? To-night, at one stroke, I will do all

I have to do. — And then night comes, and the mind is overwhelmed by the mass of things overdue; sadness crushes one's strength, and on the morrow the same comedy is played again, in good faith, with the same confidence and the same conscience."

Such is Baudelaire's middle ground of life. Was I wrong in saying that it was really an inner death? Yet he could not escape it, for it was the very stuff of his daily existence. Where is the end? Baudelaire is unable to reëstablish his will to do in its sphere, so that nothing is left him but Pascal's "extremes". And we shall see how the very reaction of tossing from one extreme to the other is what allows him, although at the price of his life, to salvage his work.

5

Spirituality is not only Baudelaire's peak but also his bedrock. Every great man uses certain words so personally that his whole being passes into them and charges them with their utmost meaning. Spirit is the word for imperious genius that Baudelaire's stamped above all others. Without ever losing sight of its original meaning of breath (*spiritus*), so that the word seems always airy, he used it in all its senses except that of *wit* (*esprit*), a meaning he loathed, as shown in the following line: "Et l'esprit me fait mal." He twice uses the word in its fullest sense, in calling Guys "a spiritual citizen of the world", in speaking of conversation as "That great, that single pleasure of a spiritual being." (Gautier said that "Baudelaire talked much of his ideas, very little of his feelings, and never of his actions.") Even Baudelaire's intelligence was always spiritual, I mean even in its beginning, even before that artistic working over that with other men, and great men too, supervenes to give the illusion of spirituality. This is a most rare phenomenon in France, and, aside from Pascal who is so much above all the rest that he must always be thought of separately, I can think of no others but Joubert and Maurice de Guérin. But if we shift from Baudelaire's intelligence to his sensibility, there spirituality * informs every part. We will not yet speak of his sentiments, but he had no sensation, however, heavy, charged and base by origin, that was not at once mirrored in spirituality. Every passing sensation becomes the "truely spiritual" chamber of the prose poem quoted above, a poem that is essential for insight into Baudelaire's daily drama, since, his "horror" of awakening, his "hideous lethargy" and his "anger" arise above all from this fact that when deserted by his spirituality, Baudelaire can feel literally nothing.*

Such is the extension, the indefinite expansion, that Baudelaire gives to one meaning of the word *spirit;* but in his case the word has another and more important meaning, its traditional and strictly Christian usage. *Poeta christianissimus* is the sub-title of Rudolf Kassner's essay on Baudelaire. Here is one of Baudelaire's very rare references to his childhood: "Even in childhood I leaned toward mysticism.

---

* "And also, my dear friend, not too much wit; it jars on my present way of life. . . . Some months ago Christophe gave me a number of the Journal d'Alençon in which you let it be known that the translator and admirer of Poe would end like his model. That is wit . . . I am sure, for my part, that you misunderstand that genius. You have talked with the rowdy gusto of wit about a man you do not know." (Letter to Poulet-Malassis, 1853.) "France especially annoys me because every Frenchman is like Voltaire." (*Mon Cœur* . . .) Baudelaire had an impertinence, even an insolence that dotted an i and clinched a nail in a characteristic way; but any impression of wit comes from Baudelaire's objective seriousness and imperturbability in contrast with the unworthiness of the object. Baudelaire himself was of course the first to relish this.

Letters, p. 376 (Mercure de France). Both these texts relate to his conversation and confirm Gautier's remark: "Baudelaire's conversation was wholly metaphysical. He talked much of his ideas, very little of his feelings, and never of his actions."

Conversations with God." That Baudelaire had a religious life at this most susceptible age is still further shown by a letter from his mother to Ancelle, written during the worst of the family quarrels, when the separation occurred and the poet was giving way to his most violent utterance. His mother is answering Ancelle, who has written her about his last interview with her son, and she concludes with these words: "Nevertheless I thought he had a base of religion, without exercise, but still with faith." Doubtless Baudelaire's hatred for his stepfather, and his exasperation at having his money put in trust kept him for years from showing anything to his mother that might console her; and then, his other "passion for all the plastic arts that lasted from childhood" so flourishes from 1842 to 1850 that it hides his base of religion and for the time being seems to "deprive him of faith" in the strict acceptance of the term. But when did loss of faith ever stop a man from being a Christian? Christianity is not so lightly ousted; indeed nothing stamps human organizations more indelibly. In some cases loss of faith even deepens the original furrow since the conviction of sin is not always lost as well, and when that stays without its antidote of belief, and (above all) of Christian exercise, it fastens on the soul to gnaw. Original sin is a fundamental part of Baudelaire, and to the problem of the existence of sin in the world, he had a right to say *ego te intus et in cute novi*, since he constantly felt it in him in the shape of St. Paul's prodigious "law of the members". It has even been said that the idea of original sin flattered Baudelaire's vanity, but that is merely a sample of the wit that Baudelaire despised. His immanent Christianity is so clear, and can be proved by so many texts, that I purposely choose one in which his sincerity has been doubted:

"I was once present where some men were asking what was the greatest pleasure of love. Of course one answered: to receive, and another: to give oneself. This man said: the pleasure of pride, and that man: the gratification of humbleness. All these muck rakers talked like the *Imitation of Christ.* At last one impudent Utopian spoke up and said that the greatest pleasure of love was making little citizens for one's country. I, however, said: the one and supreme gratification of love lies in the certainty of doing *evil,* and both men and women know, from birth, that nowhere but in evil do they find gratification."

When this axiom, which condenses all Baudelaire's most frightful intimate experience, was first printed in Crépet's book, it was called an epigram of glib perversity and a flat paradox. Yet this thoroughgoing equation between gratification and sin is indeed profoundly christian. But Baudelaire's immanent christianity could not do without the aid of the spirit. "De Maistre and Edgar Poe taught me to reason." We can leave out Poe, whose influence was chiefly esthetic, but the extent of De Maistre's action on him is clear in pages like this one from the *Soireés:* *

"Man *gravitates*, if I may say so, towards the regions of light. No beaver, swallow or bee tries to know more than its predecessors. All beings stay quietly in their places. All are debased, but do not know it. Only man feels it, and this feeling is proof at once of his greatness and of his wretchedness, of his sublime rights and of his unbelievable debasement. His sad plight does not even allow him the happiness of not knowing himself; he cannot help looking ceaselessly at himself, and cannot do so without blushing; his very greatness humiliates him, since the lights that uplift him as high as angels serve but to reveal his abominable cravings that debase him as low as beasts. He searches the depths of his being for some sound particle, and cannot find it, for evil has tainted everything, and *the whole of man is sickness*."

---

* Voltaire, in "*Les Oreilles du comte de Chesterfield*", makes a jest of this immortal soul that is lodged for nine months between excrements and urines. Voltaire, like every lazy man, hated mystery. The Church, being unable to suppress love, wished at least to disinfect it, and so established marriage.

"In this placing he might at least have seen some of Fate's malice or satire against love, and in the manner of our begetting a mark of original sin. In truth, we can make love only with excretory organs." (Journaux intimes, p. 66.)

"Being an unthinkable jumble of two different and incompatible powers, an aborted centaur, man feels himself the outcome of some unknown wrong, of some hateful mixture that has tainted him to the core."

And then there are the two last lines of "*Un Voyage à Cythère*":

> Ah! Seigneur, donnez-moi la force et le courage
> De contempler mon cœur et mon corps sans dégoût!

To this strong intellectual framework from De Maistre, whose disciple he loved to proclaim himself, one has but to add the spectacle to Baudelaire's daily life. Baudelaire proves himself Christian by his bonds to sin, bonds tightened by his very failings, and although he is utterly unlike the great Christians in his exercise, for him, as for them, there are two poles, Satan and God. "Every man, at every minute, feels two simultaneous postulates, one towards God, the other towards Satan." The part that Satan plays in Baudelaire's work is very much greater than usually thought, and it must be our task to bring this influence to light. Those who see mere affectation and puerility in Baudelaire's* frequent references to Satan should read the end of his letter to Alphonse Toussenel:

---

* "And for a man like you to throw mud just casually, as if at some mere editor of the Siècle, at de Maistre, the great genius of our time, *a seer*. . . . All the heresies I just spoke of are after all nothing but the outcome of the great modern heresy of the artificial teaching, put in place of the natural teaching, I mean, the suppression of the idea of *original sin*." Letter to Alphonse Toussenel, 1856. Lettres. p. 84 (Mercure de France).

"Your letter rouses many dormant ideas in me, and with regard to *original sin* and the *form patterned on the idea*, I had often thought that the destructive and disgusting beasts might perhaps be merely the coming to life, the embodiment and the birth into matter of man's *evil thoughts*."

"The coming to life, the birth into matter of man's evil thoughts," the "destructive beasts" and the satanic attributes spring from Baudelaire's anguish, whence their whole validity; Satan's presence around him, inside him, that is what gives this conception its body, its urgency and its intimacy.

Sans cesse à mes côtés s'agite le Démon;
Il nage autour de moi comme un air impalpable;
Je l'avale et le sens qui brûle mon poumon;
Et l'emplit d'un désir éternel et coupable.

Parfois il prend, sachant mon grand amour de l'Art,
La forme de la plus séduisante des femmes;
Et, sous de spécieux prétextes de cafard,
Accoutume ma lèvre à des philtres infâmes.

Il me conduit ainsi, loin du regard de Dieu,
Haletant et brisé de fatigue, au milieu
Des plaines de l'Ennui, profondes et désertes.

Et jette dans mes yeux pleins de confusion
Des vêtements souillés, des blessures ouvertes,
Et l'appareil sanglant de la destruction!

"Loin du regard de Dieu", there is Baudelaire's torture, for the "two postulates" are "at every minute simultaneous". This calls to mind Paul Bourget's penetrating remarks:

"When catholicism educates a man it reveals the world of spiritual realities to him. This revelation is unimportant for many, who already from their youth believed in God, though merely mentally, never feeling Him as a living person. Such men are satisfied with an abstract faith in ideas, that lends itself to any transformation. Needing no vision, but a dogma, they change their original belief in God into belief in liberty, or in revolution, or in socialism, or in science. Such transformations are to be seen daily in oneself and in one's neighbors. Another fate awaits a mystical soul, such as Baudelaire's, for this soul, when it believes, is not content with a faith in an idea. It *sees* God. He is no mere word, no mere symbol, no mere abstraction, but a Being with whom the soul dwells as with a father who loves, knows and understands it. . . . A mystic can have no keener anguish than the thought, that his need for belief might be merely subjective, that his former faith issued from himself and was all his own making."

Baudelaire had indeed a mystical soul, and how deeply! He never wrote anything more sincere than this beginning of De Profundis Clamavi:

J'implore ta pitié, Toi, l'unique que j'aime,
Du fond du gouffre obscur où mon cœur est tombé.

He had indeed a right to say "Toi, l'unique que j'aime," since it was only God that he loved, as will become clear later on when we turn to Baudelaire's conception of love. But he loves God as the climate proper to his genius, the air in which his wings can stretch themselves:

Envole-toi bien loin de ces miasmes morbides;
Va te purifier dans l'aire supérieur,
Et bois, comme une pure et divine liqueur,
Le feu clair qui remplit les espaces limpides.

Everything in Baudelaire is a function of his genius, a genius which thirsted above all for a God to pray to, without, I might almost say, believing in Him:

"In this horrible state of mind, helpless and desperate, I was again tempted by suicide (I can tell you now that it has passed) and at all hours of the day this temptation dogged me. That way absolute escape seemed to lie, escape from everything. This *lasted three months*, and at the same time, by a contradiction that only seems strange, I was praying *constantly* (to whom, to what definite being, I absolutely do not know). . . .

"And God, you will say. I long with all my heart (and with what sincerity only I can know) to believe that someone, invisible and outside me, takes an interest in my fate; but what to do to believe this?"

He never wholly escaped from this great sign that Christianity stamps upon a soul, this obsession for prayer in the very face of unbelief. The notion of sin and, deeper still, the need for prayer, seem to be two realities even more fundamentally imbedded than faith itself. This brings to mind Flaubert's saying: "I am at bottom a mystic and I believe in nothing." He and Baudelaire always understood each other like brothers.

6

But though spirituality is a part of Baudelaire, it does not follow that the spiritual state of grace can be lastingly maintained. A jotting of *Fusées* shows well enough what Baudelaire thought in this respect: "Serena's portrait by Seneca. Stragiros's by St. John Chrysostom. Acedia, the monks' complaint." This acedia, this apathy, always the terrible affliction of those who live according to the spirit, fastened itself more fixedly on Baudelaire than on anyone I can think of. In a sense he always had but one problem, to recapture at any cost and hold that state of spirituality which many, but fleeting, experiences have proved to be the only state which could free the powers of his genius. He is one of those great and unhappy men who feel only at the peak of their being that they live. Baudelaire never lost sight of this spirituality, his source of inspiration, but saw it infinitely aloft, and saw himself shackled to earth by the "law of members."

> Au-dessus des étangs, au-dessus des vallées,
> Des montagnes, des bois, des nuages, des mers,
> Par delà le soleil, par delà les éthers,
> Par delà les confins des spheres étoilées,
>
> Mon esprit, tu te meus avec agilité,
> Et, comme un bon nageur qui se pâme dans l'onde,
> Tu sillonnes gaîment l'immensité profonde
> Avec une indicible et mâle volupté.

But before each of these sovereign flights, the "strong swimmer" went under, and how many times! The closer one knows Baudelaire the more one sees him as a drowning man grasping wildly for a life preserver. From 1852 to the end of 1857 he seems to have sought this life preserver in love, and nothing takes us deeper into a knowledge of Baudelaire than an investigation of what he means by love.

The chief piece of evidence for this is his letter to a model, Madame Marie X, whom he met at the house of a friend. When he declared his love to her, she sent him away, saying that her heart belonged to another. He then wrote this letter:

MADAME,

Can it really be that I must never again see you? This question haunts me, for my heart has already come to feel your absence as a great privation. When I learned that you had stopped posing, and that I was unwitting cause, I felt strangely sad.

I wanted to write you, even though I am not given to writing; one almost always regrets it. But I run no risk, since my mind is made up to give myself to you for good and all.

You know our long talk on Thursday was most strange. It has changed my whole state and makes me write this letter.

Think of a man saying: "I love you," and begging, and a woman answering: "Love you? I? Never! There is but one I love, and woe to anyone who would follow, for he would earn my coldness and contempt." And this same man, for the pleasure of looking longer into your eyes, lets you talk of another, talk of nothing but him, warm your blood for him alone, and think only of him. All these avowals have changed you, most strangely, from a merely desirable woman into a woman that I love for her candor, for her passion, for her directness, for her youth and for her folly.

I have lost greatly by these explanations, since you were so decided that I had to submit at once. But you, madame, have greatly gained, for you have inspired my respect and deep esteem. Live ever thus and treasure the passion that makes you so lovely and so happy.

Come back, I beg, and I will make my longings gentle and modest. I deserved your contempt when I answered that I would be content with crumbs. I lied. Oh, but if you only knew how lovely you were that evening. I dare not be commonplace with compliments, but your eyes, your mouth, your whole living and moving person comes before my closed eyes and I feel it has come to stay.

Come back, I beg you on my knees. I do not say that you will find me free from love. However you cannot keep my longings from haunting your arms, your lovely hands, your eyes where all your life is gathered, your whole adorable body, no, you cannot stop that. But fear not; you are something I worship, and could never defile. I shall always see you as radiant as I did. Your whole person is so good, so beautiful, and so sweet to breathe. For me you are life and motion, not so much because of your quick gestures and the violent side of your nature, as because of your eyes, that cannot but inspire a poet with deathless love. How can I tell you how much I love your eyes and all your beauty? You blend two warring graces, the grace of the child and the grace of the woman. Oh, believe me when I tell you from the bottom of my heart that you are adorable and that I love you deeply. The feeling is virtuous that binds me to you forever. Do what I will, you are henceforth my talisman and my strength. I love you, Marie, there's no denying that, but the love that I feel for you is the love of the Christian for his God. It would be sacrilege to give an earthly and often shameful name to this bodyless and mystical cult, this suave and chaste attraction that unites my soul to yours, whether you will or no. I was dead and you gave me life. Oh, you little know how much I owe you, for your angel glance struck unknown joys into me, your eyes drew me into the soul's bliss, into all that is perfect and delicate. Henceforth, you are my one dream, my passion and my loveliness; you are the part of myself that a spiritual essence has shapen.

Through you, Marie, I shall be strong and great. Like Petrarch, I will immortalise my Laura. Be my guardian Angel, my Muse and my Madonna, and lead me on the path to Beauty.

Do answer me one word, I beg you, just one. Everyone's life has doubtful and decisive days when a token of friendship, a look, a scribbled something will fling us into sillyness or madness. I swear to you that I am in such a state. A word from you would be a blessing to gaze on and learn by heart. Could you but know how I love you. Here, I fling myself at your feet: one word, say one word. . . . No, you will not!

Happy, a thousand times happy, must the man be whom you have chosen out of all, you who are so wise and fair and gifted, all desire, spirit and heart. What woman could ever take your place! I dare not ask to see you, lest you refuse. I had rather wait.

I shall wait for years, and when you see yourself loved with respect, with complete disinterestedness, then you will recall that you started by treating me badly, and you will own that you did wrong.

Anyway, I am not free to ward off what blows the idol may please to strike at me. You were pleased to show me the door. I am pleased to adore you. The matter is settled.

Baudelaire shows his whole attitude toward love in these pages that are so beautiful and so clear that I have scruples about touching them; and yet I must, to bring out the main feature. The episode of Marie X is all the more significant in that it begins with a simple desire. The refusal of this desire "changes his whole state" and occasions the letter. This changed state is simply love in the only sense in which Baudelaire could ever conceive or feel it. Let us not be misled: here is none of that exasperation of desire, none of that will to possess that obstacles usually redouble. Instead of the "bloody scaffoldings of destruction," as Baudelaire calls the *durus amor*, there is a yearning for contemplation that needs only the presence, and that really possesses only because it possesses nothing. "I was dead, and you gave me life." A man like Baudelaire must feel himself dead in the relative anonymity of desire, as of life. When he says: "The feeling is virtuous that binds me to you forever," one cannot but think of Dante and Petrarch. Love becomes the stair of essential virtue, which consists for Baudelaire in being faithful to his genius. "Through you, Marie, I shall be strong and great. . . . Be my guardian Angel, my Muse and my Madonna, and lead me on the path to Beauty."

We have only this one letter to Marie X. It is printed immediately before the first of his letters to Madame Sabatier, which shows well enough that Baudelaire did not seek in love, the favors of any particular goddess, but the permanence of the cult itself. Today we know the whole story of this tragic meeting. From 1852 until the publication of the *Fleurs du Mal*, Baudelaire, an often silent guest at the Sunday dinners, wrote Madame Sabatier a series of letters and accompanied each by one of his most beautiful poems. He sent these anonymously until the following incident occurred:

> For the first time I write you in my own handwriting. Were I not overwhelmed with business and letters (my hearing comes day after tomorrow) I would take this opportunity to ask you forgiveness for so much folly and nonsense. But then, have you not punished me enough already, especially through your little sister? The little beast! She froze me when she met me one day and burst out laughing in my face and said: "Are you still in love with my sister and do you still write her those grand letters?" I realised two things,

that when I had wanted to hide myself, I had hidden very badly, and that the charm of your face masked but little charity. Brats *love*, but poets *worship*, and I fear that your sister is hardly made to understand eternal things.

Allow me, even at the risk of making you laugh also, to renew those protestations that caused that little fool such loud laughter. Imagine a medley of dreaming, sympathy and respect, with endless nonsense full of earnestness, and you will have some idea of that deep sincerity that I can define no better.

I can never forget you. They say there have been poets who have lived their whole lives with their eyes fixed on one dear image. I think indeed (although I am biased) that *faithfulness is one of the marks of genius.*

You are more than a dear image of dreams. You are my *superstition.* When I commit some blunder, I say to myself: "Lord, if she saw that!" When I do something good, I say: "There is something that brings me closer to her — in spirit."

And the last time that I had the happiness (in spite of myself) of meeting you (for you cannot imagine how elaborately I flee you) I said to myself: "How odd if that carriage were waiting for her. Perhaps I had better take another street." And then: "Good evening," with that beloved voice whose ring enchants and shatters me. And I went away saying: "Good evening" over and over as I walked, and trying to catch your voice.

This letter is dated August 18, 1857. Less than two weeks later, on August 31st, Baudelaire wrote again, with a sincerity whose frightfulness betrays the effort it must have cost him:

I have destroyed the mass of nonsense on my table. It was not serious enough for you, dearly beloved. I have re-read your two letters and make a fresh answer, for which I need some courage, since my nerves are so frightfully on edge that I could shriek; and I awoke still disturbed by that unaccountable moral unrest with which I came away. . . . Absolute lack of shame.

For that I love you all the more.

. . . I feel that I have been yours since the first day I saw you. Do what you will with me, I am yours, body and soul.

Woe to you if you do not hide this letter! Do you really know what you are saying? The law imprisons those who fail to pay promissory notes, but the violation of vows of friendship and of love goes unpunished.

I said to you yesterday: "You will forget me, you will betray me. He who amuses you now will soon bore you." And today I add: "Only he will suffer, who, like a fool, takes matters of the soul in earnest." You see, dear heart, what hateful prejudices I have about women. In short, *I have no faith*. Your soul is beautiful, but, after all, feminine.

See how a few days have upset our position. First of all we are obsessed by the dread of hurting a good man who has the happiness still to be in love. And then, we are afraid of our own storm, because we know (I especially) that some knots are hard to loosen.

And then and then, a few days ago you were a goddess, something so convenient, so beautiful and inviolable. And here you are a woman. — And if, to my sorrow, I should ever earn the right to be jealous! The mere thought is horrible, for with a woman like you, whose eyes smile on and allure all the world, it must be torture.

Your second letter bears an English seal whose gravity would please me better were I sure that you understood it. *Never meet or never part*. That certainly means that never to have met were best for us, but now that we have met, we must never part. This might not be without its point on a letter of farewell.

Well, let come what will. I am a fatalist. But this I know, that I have a horror of passion, because I know it and all its slavery, — and here the dear image that ruled all my life's adventures is becoming too seductive.

I dare not re-read this letter. I might have to tone it down, for I dread hurting you. I fear I have unbared some of the vileness of my nature.

I cannot make you go like this into that foul rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau. And yet I have much more to tell you. Do write me how and where.

Let me know a few days beforehand if our little plan becomes possible.

Farewell, dearly beloved. I somewhat resent your being so very charming, for when I carry away the scent of your arms and your hair, I also carry away the longing to return, and that is an unbearable obsession.

I must certainly take this myself to the rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau lest you be going there. It will reach you earlier.

Possession had exactly reversed the places of the man and the woman. In the beginning Madame Sabatier seems to have been merely touched by the quality and the perseverance of Baudelaire's devotion, and probably also by the poems she had inspired. We cannot be sure that she loved him when she gave herself, but she certainly did afterwards. The four scraps of her letters, quoted by Jacques Crépet, show once again how singleness and sincerity of passion sharpen a fine woman's intelligence, instead of dulling it. When she writes of Baudelaire: "Listen, dear, may I say what I think? You do not love me," she speaks as a woman, and from a woman's point of view she is absolutely right. She is so positive simply because women feel things in wholes; when they love, it is with a single rush that so fuses body, mind and heart that they can neither admit nor conceive acting otherwise. A divided mind in a woman is almost always the result of perversity, unless it be caused by successive despairs. A woman starts out with singleness, and how deep is her unhappiness when she finds no singleness in a man. For Madame Sabatier to make distinctions, she would have had to falsify the integrity of her love itself.

But a man, on the other hand, is split up almost in proportion to his greatness, and only a heroic effort can reduce him to singleness. For a man like Baudelaire this was the end of the adventure, for with him there was not merely a split, but absolute incompatibility between loving and possessing. This antinomy is a fundamental part of his nature. What could the celebration of the most lofty cult have in common with the gratification of the basest appetite? What bond was there between love, the treasury of strength, the goad of genius, and possession, the unrivalled means of forgetfulness? In keeping these two orders apart, Baudelaire entered a blind alley, and yet he obeys the deep logic in his inner self, and this experience must have shown him once for all that he could not fuse the two. He wrote to Madame Sabatier: "I am an egoist. I am using you." As long as he possessed nothing the image of Madame Sabatier watched over his genius and inspired it; but the instant he profanes the idol, all is over, and Madame Sabatier can do no more for him from the moment when she gives him everything.

Baudelaire had made this likely frustration inevitable, when he sent Madame Sabatier *L'Aube Spirituelle* with this English dedication: *After a night of pleasure and desolation, my soul belongs to you.* . . . Baudelaire was then lost. Until then he still had a right to hope for salvation from Madame Sabatier's image; from then on, he had to pass through debauchery to recover the image in its purity. As long as he resists, the two elements struggle in him freely, but as soon as yielding becomes a habit, a rhythm of automatic reaction settles in that swings him from love to debauchery and back again. The result is a kind of mechanical functioning of the inner life that is probably the sharpest punishment that debauchery can inflict on a higher man. The minute that Baudelaire lets this rhythm set in, then possession cannot extinguish his love, since Madame Sabatier serves a different purpose.

Must we understand by this that Baudelaire was incapable of love? If so, would we not thereby incriminate Dante, Petrarch, and that whole notion of love that produced chivalry and culminated in the idea of the Lady? It would be above all highly unjust not to allow for the deep and incalculable disturbance that genius brings into the life of the affections. Because the works of genius are stamped with calm, with mastery and control, we too readily assume that their beginnings must resemble their ends. We fall heir to the order of the artist, and then we turn against the man and take him to task for his disorder, as though it were not the wretchedness and the sufferings produced by these very disorders that had struck forth, at favored hours, the *lucidus ordo.*

Thus Baudelaire failed to base any abiding state of grace on love. He then sought nothing but a moment's oblivion, and had no way to find it but through all the kins of drunkenness, opium, wine, hashish, and above all debauchery, because there he expected the deepest oblivion, and probably because he gambled on the ensuing reaction.

Si ce n'est par un soir sans lune, deux à deux,
D'endormir la douleur sur un lit hasardeux.

Yet even here there are degrees. Beneath the guardian Angel, stands the Idol; beneath the worship whose fervor is intensified by distance from its object, stands the contemplation of the presence, Baudelaire's theme.

Elle était donc couchée, et se laissait aimer,
Et du haut du divan elle souriait d'aise
A mon amour profond et doux comme la mer
Qui verse elle montait comme vers sa falaise.

Les yeux fixés sur moi, comme un tigre dompté,
D'un air vague et rêveur elle essayait des poses,
Et la candeur unie à la lubricité
Donnait un charme neuf à ses métamorphoses.

Et son bras et sa jambe, et sa cuisse et ses reins,
Polis comme de l'huile, onduleux comme un cygne,
Passaient devant mes yeux clairvoyants et sereins;
Et son ventre et ses seins, ces grappes de ma vigne.

S'avançaient plus câlins que les anges du mal,
Pour troubler le repos où mon âme était mise,
Et pour la déranger du rocher de cristal,
Où calme et solitaire elle s'était assise.

Baudelaire's supreme delight was to contemplate a woman's beautiful body, and when her beauty was perfect, he seems to have attained a moment of full calm, a spiritual beatitude. But fleeting, for contemplation cannot continue without tempting. Baudelaire's vice is indeed vice, since it does not spring from a primitive blind thirst, but from the gradual and irritating infiltration of an idea. To such cases the great sentence of the *Imitation of Christ* (I, 13) always applies.

> *Nam primo occurrit menti simplex cogitatio; deinde fortis imaginatio; postea delectatio, et motus pravus, et assensio.*

In the beginning, you are free to reject this idea, but once accepted, you can no longer control it, and desire seems to become more resistless than in an actual need. Wilde's deep word comes to mind: "Yes, one of the great secrets of life is to cure the soul through the senses, and then the senses through the soul." But whoever has come to that, is doomed to the worst circle of a moral hell.

7

It is easy to see why Baudelaire thus ends his account of a visit from Meryon, who was already going mad:

"After he had left, I asked myself how it could be that I, whose mind and nerves have always had everything needed for going mad, could still be sane. Seriously, I rendered Heaven the thanks of the Pharisee."

Yes, Baudelaire had every right to go mad. But instead —

Comme montent au ciel les soleils rajeunis
Après s'être lavés au fond des mers profondes

the *Fleurs du Mal* arise.

"Despising everyone and despising myself, I long to redeem myself and to appease my pride in the stillness and loneliness of the night. Souls of those I have loved, souls of those I have sung, strengthen me, uphold me, uplift me out of the falsehood and the rotting mists of the world. O Lord my God, grant me grace to write a few beautiful poems and prove to myself that I am not the lowest of men, that I am not baser than those whom I loathe."

Who does not recall the beginning of this prose poem, the account of that day that was to sweep a thousand like days into its net? "Despising everyone and despising myself" — there is the push that at last starts his inspiration. This push once given, each destructive element becomes a corner stone to bear up the formidable building, a shelter for the strong.

O moine fainéant! quand saurai-je donc faire
Du spectacle vivant de ma triste misère
Le travail de mes mains et l'amour de mes yeux!

When indeed? But here Baudelaire is slandering himself, as he does all through the *Fleurs du Mal* and the *Spleen de Paris*. Here lies his true subject, unbounded anywhere save by the limits of the human being himself. No work ever had a surer center, whence it always takes off, and which it never forgets, even at the peak of its flight. The purest aspiration, the richest nostalgia, the most sinisterly populated sewer, all is drawn with a sincerity so perfect that surpasses the fragile perfection of a sentiment and attains the indestructibility of bronze. Doubtless every great work of art is an evasion, and for Baudelaire's nostalgia it was the supreme evasion, but only vouchsafed him into an absent world, the only world that his imagination was admitted to create wholly and to saturate with its riches. Everywhere else the action is that of certain El Grecos, and we cannot speak of evasion, but of an ascension in which the poet willfully loads himself with the most dragging encumberments. No balloonist ever took off for so lofty a soaring so laden with ballast, for his sincerity forbade him casting any away.

> "If Irenaeus may be accepted as a witness . . . the spiritual man, according to the Valentinian teaching, was incapable of corruption by any course of life whatever. As gold, they said, when lying buried in mud, does not lose the nature of gold, but remains distinct from mud, so the spiritual man, in whatever course of action he may be engaged, retains his spiritual nature and is incapable of deterioration." *

Baudelaire's case certainly lends a strange and powerful support to the Valentinian heresy: think of the unfinished poem that was to have been inserted in the second edition of the Fleurs du Mal:

Anges revêtus d'or, de pourpre et d'hyacinthe,
O vous, soyez témoins que j'ai fait mon devoir
Comme un parfait chimiste et comme une âme sainte.
Car j'ai de chaque chose extrait la quintessence.
Tu m'as donné ta boue et j'en ai fait de l'or.

---

* Mansel, The Gnostic Heresies, p. 196. Paul Bourget, in his Sensations d'Italie, has an interesting chapter comparing the case of some modern poets, especially Baudelaire. with this Valentinian heresy.

But this spiritual incorruptibility does not protect the envelope from wear, and we find in *Mon Cœur mis à Nu:*

> "I have nursed my hysteria with rapture and freight. By now my head swims continually, and today, January 23, 1862, I received a strange warning: I felt a wind brush past me from the wing of imbecility."

The end of *Fusées* sums up Baudelaire's still worldly thought.* After predicting the future of the world in terms that become truer day by day, he thus concludes:

> "As for myself, I sometimes feel a prophet's absurdity, but I know I shall never have the charity of a physician. Lost in this vile world, elbowed by mobs, I am like a wearied man whose eye looks backward into the abyss of time, on nothing but disillusion and bitterness, and forward on a storm that holds nothing new, neither enlightenment nor sorrow. On the evening when this man has stolen a few hours of pleasure from fate, then, lulled in his digestion, forgetful, as far as possible of the past, content with the present and resigned to the future, drunk with his aloofness and his elegance, proud of being less base than those who pass by, he eyes the smoke from his cigar and says to himself: 'What do I care what becomes of all these lives?'"

But five years pass. The *Fleurs du Mal* have had a second edition. Baudelaire stands at the height of his genius; nevertheless, a new inclination shows itself; of course he was ill, in debt, irrevocably alone — yet there was something more.

"Consolation through the arts," thus Baudelaire defined the beneficent power of the many forms of beauty. But the greater an artist, the more surely comes a time when art ceases to hold him. The moment his work begins to yield us an inexhaustable consolation, the artist is already detached from it; and it no longer touches him, which shows that he has attained a certain height and plenitude. If, as almost always happens with those artists whom Baudelaire called the *Beacons*, their feeling has passed into form without spilling a drop of the divine liquor, then the very perfection of their work undoes the bond, and the artist's crowning proof of his supremacy as an artist lies in his very turning away from art. He has accomplished his task here below too completely; he has done with us and looks elsewhere. These haughty beings never begin again, and if they do not fall silent, if their emotion, growing constantly purer, stronger and richer, cannot be kept back, it finds vents and utterance outside art itself. The world of forms is left behind in the only way it may be, through having been in its time, the supreme world.

---

* The date of writing of *Fusées* is unknown; it was collected some time before 1857.

Something would be lacking from Baudelaire's greatness if the hostages that he left in our hands had not become almost indifferent to him before their time — if he had not written *Mon Cœur mis à Nu.*

I once heard an ardent admirer of Baudelaire maintain that *Mon Cœur mis à Nu* overwhelms one simply because it shows Baudelaire had nothing left to say, or that at least he had lost his power of expression, and I admit that at first glance many passages seem to confirm this view. *Mon Cœur mis à Nu* is indeed all emotion from end to end, and that is the secret of its extraordinary grip. But where some would see a void of thought, I think that it is rather Baudelaire's tendency, increasing toward the end of his life, to give us nothing but the results, and keep the searching and the working to himself. He slashes and no longer weaves; and he seems then to have lost the middle ground of the spirit along with the others. I readily grant that Baudelaire had no great inner fertility, that he was even lean in this respect, but the essential thing about him is not the extent of his contact, but his ability to transmute everything touched. Every word in *Mon Cœur mis à Nu* is an intimate summing up or a posted sentinel — a memento or a talisman. And then he probably seems impotent because he is dwelling on so very few themes. And here we must not forget that the old age of genius (and all tended to make Baudelaire an old man at forty) is above all retrenchment and rumination. The old age of a Christian genius could be nothing else in the very proportion of the sincerity of his Christianity, and for such a one after a certain point, nothing but salvation matters, and when we reproach him with an emptiness of thought, we speak the language of the intellect, which, gathered under a few heads that he has searched through, has nothing more to say to him. The wholly Christian tone of *Mon Cœur mis à Nu* sets it apart even in Baudelaire's own work. Christianity's most absolute innovation is probably the idea that man attains his summits by yielding. The highest non-Christian wisdom, such as Marcus Aurelius's, puts man's perfection in a certain tension, whose pride, and clear awareness of self and the world, Christianity banished for humility, pity and the healing dew of tears. Now in this, Baudelaire was not altogether Christian until *Mon Cœur mis à Nu*. Yet we stand debtors to his pride, to which we owe much that makes the *Fleurs du Mal* what they are. But when this pride falls, as in certain unforgettable passages of *Mon Cœur mis à Nu*, we see a soul at last unbound. This tone, so changed, submissive, and lowly, that no longer asserts, but implores, this humility, this modesty in desires and ends mean that Baudelaire really thinks of nothing but his mother and of paying off his debts. The God of the expulsion from the earthly Paradise gives way to the true Father, come down into the poet's daily life and mingling in all his preoccupations, an unfailing sign of growing faith.

"Pray every morning to God, the fountain head of all strength and all justice, to my father, to Mariette, and to Poe as intercessors; pray them to give me strength for all my duties and to grant my mother a long enough life to enjoy my change of heart; work all day long, or at least as long as my strength lasts; trust in God, that is, in Justice itself, for the success of my plans; pray, every evening, afresh to God for life and strength for my mother and myself; divide my earnings into four parts, one for current expenses, one for my creditors, one for my friends and one for my mother; obey the principles of the strictest sobriety, of which the first is the suppression of every single stimulant whatsoever."

Baudelaire had no time to reach Pascal's "whole and sweet renunciation," nor his "Joy, tears of joy," but no one can read the above quoted end of *Mon Cœur mis à Nu* without feeling that every day was bringing him closer, and now or never is the time to end with the evangelists: "Peace on earth and good will towards men."

CHARLES DU BOS
(translated by A. Hyatt Mayor)

ON A VIEW OF PASADENA FROM THE HILLS

FROM the high terrace porch I watch the dawn.
No light appears, though dark has mostly gone,
Sunk from the cold and monstrous stone. The hills
Lie naked but not light. The darkness spills
Down the remoter gulleys; pooled, will stay,
Too low to melt, not yet alive with day.
Below the windows, the lawn matted deep,
Under its close-cropped tips, with dewy sleep,
Gives off a faint hush, all its plushy swarm
Alive with coolness reaching to be warm.
Gray windows at my back, the massy frame
Dull with the blackness that has not a name;
But down below, the garden is still young,
Of five year's growth, perhaps, and terrace-hung,
Drop by slow drop, of seeping concrete walls.
Such are the bastions of our pastorals!

Here are no palms! They once lined country ways,
Where old white houses glared down dusty days,
With small round towers, blunt-peaked, above small trees.
Those towers are now the hiving-place of bees.
The palms were coarse; their leaves hung thick with dust;
The roads were muffled deep. But now deep rust
Has fastened on the wheels that labored then.
Peace to all such, and to all sleeping men!
I lived my childhood there, a passive dream
In the expanse of that recessive scheme.

ON A VIEW OF PASADENA FROM THE HILLS

Slow air, slow fire! O deep delay of Time!
That summer crater smoked like slaking lime,
The hills so dry, so dense the underbrush,
That where I pushed my way the giant hush
Was changed to soft explosion, as the sage
Broke down to powdered ash, the sift of age,
And fell along my path in shadowy rift.

On these rocks now no burning ashes drift.
Mowed lawn has crept along the granite bench.
The yellow blossoms of acacia drench
The dawn with pollen; and, with waxen green,
The long leaves of the eucalypti screen
The closer hills from view — lithe, tall, and fine,
And elegant with youth, they bend and shine.
The small dark pool, jutting with living rock,
Trembles at every atmospheric shock,
Blurred to its depth with the cold living ooze.
From cloudy caves, heavy with summer dews,
The shyest and most tremulous beings stir,
The pulsing of their fins a lucent blur,
That, like illusion, glances off the eyes.
The pulsing mouths are metronomes, precise.

This is my father's house, no homestead here
That I shall live in, but a shining sphere
Of glass and glassy moments, frail surprise,
My father's phantasy of Paradise;
Which melts upon his death, which he attained
With loss of heart for every step he gained.
Too firmly gentle to displace the great,
He crystallized this vision somewhat late;

Forbidden now to climb the garden stair,
He views the terrace from a window chair.
His friends, hard-shaken by some twenty years,
Tremble with palsy and with senile fears,
In their late middle age gone cold and gray.
Fine men, now broken. That the vision stay,
They spend astutely their depleted breath,
With tired ironic visage wait for death.

Below the garden the hills fold away.
Deep in the valley, a mist fine as spray,
Ready to shatter into spinning light,
Conceals the city at the end of night.
The city, on the tremendous valley floor,
Draws its dream deeper for one passion more,
Superb on solid loam, and breathing deep,
Poised for a moment at the verge of sleep.

Cement roads mark the hills, wide, bending free
Of cliff and headland. Dropping toward the sea,
Through suburb after suburb, vast ravines
Swell to the summer drone of fine machines.
The driver, melting down the distance here,
May cast in flight the faint hoof of a deer
Or pass the faint head set perplexedly.
And man-made stone outgrows the living tree,
And at its rising, air is shaken, men
Are shattered, and the tremor swells again,
Extending to the naked salty shore,
Rank with the sea, which crumbles evermore.

YVOR WINTERS

THE ICE HOUSE

DOUG was waiting where the paths forked as Raeburn came through the woods. He had his Barlow out and was whittling a stick, but he threw it away and started striding along the path as soon as he saw Raeburn.

"I thought you wasn't coming," he said. "I thought you'd just about give it out and decided you wasn't coming."

"I had to get my breakfast," Raeburn told him. "I ain't going to work for nobody on a empty stomach." He cast an eye at the sun. "Tain't more'n six o'clock anyhow."

Doug slackened his pace a little. "Well," he said, "the way I look at it if you going to work for a man you ought to work for him. We don't know nothin' about this man. If we get there late he may not pay us what he said he would."

Raeburn watched his own skinny shadow racing with him, over the new green shoots of pokeberry and sassafras. It occurred to him that it was the middle of April. The dogwoods were in full flower. Channel cat ought to be biting.

"Wilmer was over to our house last night," he said. "He wanted to know if that man had asked us to work for him. He said *he* wouldn't tech it. He said he wouldn't tech it for *no* amount of money."

Doug laughed. "I don't reckon he would," he said. "I don't reckon anybody that once took a look at Wilmer would hire him for *this* job. He couldn't hold out to handle a pick . . ."

"You reckon we'll have to use a pick, Doug?"

Doug stopped short in the path. "You know who's in that ice house?" he asked.

"I don't know none of their names."

"I reckon you don't. They's Yankees. Every last one of 'em's Yankees. Course now if you don't want to you don't have to do it. I can git somebody else. Handlin' a dead Yankee ain't no more to *me* than handlin' a dead hawg, but of course now you don't have to go if you don't want to."

"Oh, I'll go," Raeburn said. "It ain't nothin' to me."

They emerged from the woods into the clearing. A hundred yards away the ice house stood, with around it the black, straight trunks of half a dozen oak trees. There were no leaves as yet on any of their branches, but a sugar tree at one corner of the house cast its yellowish green tassels low on the sloping roof.

The man was standing before the ice house door looking down into the pit. A short man, so plump that the waist band of his trousers seemed always on the verge of bursting. He heard them coming and turned around. His eyes were gray. They looked pale in the creases of his red, round face.

"Well, boys," he said affably, "I see you're like me. Early risers."

He waved his hand at the unpainted pine coffins that curved in a long glistening line around one whole side of the ice house and back behind the sugar tree. "Now what we got to do is fill them boxes up. The sooner we get them boxes filled up the sooner we get done and the sooner we get done the sooner you get your money. . . . Ain't that right, Bud?"

"That's right," Doug said. He took a pick and stepped over the threshold of the ice house on to the little ledge of earth that ran all around the circular pit. Raeburn followed him.

The skeletons were level with the earth. There was a man's skull on top of the pile. The eye sockets turned towards the door. The ribs and long leg bones slanting away diagonally across the heap. As if the man had flung himself down face forward to look out over the field. Where the light from the open door fell the bones were pale, almost white, but the bones that showed here and there underneath were darker. There was moss on some of them.

Doug picked up one of the fingers. The joints still stuck together. But as he held them in his hand the little joint dropped from its socket and a wisp of dried tendon fell out on the heap.

Doug stooped and with both hands lifted the curved grayish ribs where they were joined to the backbone. "Here," he said, "I'll give 'em to you and you put 'em outside. That's the best way to do it."

Raeburn laid the ribs in the wheelbarrow that the contractor had drawn up to the door. When he turned around Doug had more bones ready to hand him. They worked there that way for a long while. When the barrow was full the contractor wheeled it around the corner and deposited the load in the pine boxes. Raeburn could hear the light clatter as the more fragile bones fell from the barrow into the coffin and could hear the contractor whistling as he went the rounds of the boxes arranging the skeletons.

Once when he knew the contractor was at the creek getting a drink Raeburn called down into the pit cautiously:

"Doug, how you reckon he knows when he's got a whole skeleton in one of them coffins?"

Doug raised a face curiously striped by the greenish light, that filtered down through cracks in the planking. "I d'know he said. "He can put a skull in each box, I reckon, even if he don't know where all them little bones belong. . . . Naw, he can't, either. Some of them fellers was put in here without any head."

"Some of 'em was blowed clean to pieces," Raeburn said.

He looked out over the field where the new green was creeping up through the clumps of brown sedge grass. They had fought all over that field, and in the woods. In December. In the snow. When they went to bury the dead the next day the ground was frozen. A foot deep. They had to dig them out with pick axes. They had buried a lot of them on the battle field. In two big trenches. And then they had put all the rest in this ice house. . . . In 1862 that had been. Four years ago. . . .

The contractor's round, red face showed in the doorway. "Well, boys," he said, "time for a little snack, ain't it?"

Doug had heard him and was clambering up the side of the pit. Raeburn gave him a hand and pulled him up beside him. They walked around the side of the ice house and down the path to the creek. Both boys stretched themselves on the ground and lowered their faces into the water. It was clear and very cold. Raeburn gulped some down, then thrust his hands in wrist deep and let the cold water run over them. Doug was wiping his on some water grasses. "Wish I'd brought some soap," he said. He looked at Raeburn. "It ain't so hard when you just have to stand there and let me hand 'em up to you. It's getting 'em dug out and getting 'em loose from each other that's so hard."

"I'll get down in the pit after dinner," Raeburn told him.

The contractor was on his knees in the shade of the sugar tree when they came up the path. He had a trash fire going and was boiling coffee in a little bucket. Doug and Raeburn took their cold meat and biscuits and sat down on the grass. The contractor poured coffee into tin cups.

Raeburn drank the hot coffee down at a gulp. It warmed his insides and invigorated him. He decided that he would be able to eat something, after all, and bit into a biscuit, but the sick feeling swept over him again and he had to put it down quickly. He stretched out in the grass, supporting his head on one hand. Through a rift in the bushes he could see the creek shining in the noonday sun. It ran swiftly along here just above the falls, but there were good pools, all along here and higher up, too.

Doug was asking the man questions about his business. Had he ever worked for the government before? And how was he paid? By the day or so much for the job?

The contractor had finished eating his lunch and was lighting his pipe. "I ain't had much experience working for the government. Fact is, this is the first job I ever did fer 'em. Now on this job they pay me every time I take in a load of them boxes. Every time I take in a load of them boxes they count 'em and pay me so much a head." He took his pipe out of his mouth. "So much a head," he repeated meditatively.

"Channel cat ought to be biting now," Raeburn said. His voice that was not through changing yet, though he was nearly sixteen, broke unexpectedly into a deep bass. "I know a way to catch channel cat till the world looks level."

The contractor had got up and was standing beside one of the boxes. He had his stubby fingers spread out as if he were counting. "How's that?" he asked.

"Well," Raeburn said, "you have to do it at night." He fixed his large brown eyes intently on the man's face. "The channel cat, he's a night feeder, so you have to fix for him at night. . . ."

The contractor was looking at the boxes again, but he nodded politely. "What do you have to do, Son?"

"Well, you fix you some limb lines. Get you a tree that has a branch over the creek and just tie half a dozen lines on the limbs and leave 'em. Don't use too much sinker, because the channel cat he feeds on top of the water. Just fix 'em and leave 'em there and in the morning you'll have all the fish you can eat for breakfast."

The contractor came back and sat down. "Now that's right noticing, for a boy your age," he said.

"I'm fifteen," Raeburn told him. "I'm fifteen and Doug'll be sixteen next month."

"Well now . . ." the contractor said, "and what do you boys aim to do when you get through with this job?"

"Work for Mr. Foster out on the aidge of town here," Doug said, "if he needs any hands. Folks ain't hirin' many hands now, though."

The contractor shook his head. "Farm work's all right," he said. "Farm work's all right if you can't get nothing else to do, but a smart young feller like you wants to be looking out fer oppertunity. . . . Ain't everybody knows oppertunity when they see it. The folks at home all thought I was mighty foolish when I come down in this country, but I knew they was oppertunity in the south . . . bound to be." He put out his pipe and rose briskly. "Well," he said, "I reckon we better be gettin' back to work."

Doug stood up. "One thing," he said, "we got to have a ladder. They're way down in there now. I don't know as I can get 'em up to Raeburn without a ladder."

The contractor looked at the Porter house, just visible through the trees. "Maybe them folks would lend us a ladder. . . . Supposing I walk over and see if they'd lend us a ladder."

"You reckon they'll lend him a ladder?" Raeburn asked when he was gone.

"Shore they will," Doug said. "Tain't nothin' to lend anybody a ladder."

Raeburn watched the rotund figure disappear in the bushes that fringed the slope. "Mrs. Porter hates Yankees," he said. "They was three of her boys was killed by the Yankees."

Doug laughed. "This feller never killed no Confederates." He stepped back into the ice house and slid quickly down into the pit.

Raeburn protested as he took his stand on the ledge. "I told you I was going to get down there after dinner."

Doug shook his head. "I'm used to it now. You have to kind of get the hang of it. It'd just be wasting time now if we changed places."

He stirred the bones vigorously with his pick and a rank odor rose and floated in the chill air. Raeburn drew it into his nostrils, wondering. It was several minutes before he knew where he had smelled it before — in the wooden walls and flooring of an abandoned slaughter house that had stood for a long time in one of Foster's fields.

The bones that Doug was piling up on the ledge now were different from the ones on top, grayish-green, matted, some of them, with strange fungous growths. Water had stood in the ice house a good deal of the time, it seemed. Doug had to keep shifting about to find a dry place to stand on.

He did not like it if Raeburn kept his face turned away from the pit to look over the field. He talked incessantly:

"You know what that Yankee done? . . . He went down there in Blue Gum Hollow and asked Uncle Hooser's boys to work for him." He laughed. "Uncle Hooser told him them boys sho would be glad to make that money, but every one of them was away from home." He laughed again, so hard that he shook all over. "Every last one of them niggers was away from home!"

"Niggers is funny," Raeburn agreed. "When my Uncle

Rod was killed . . . over in Caroline county . . . killed right there on his front porch . . . there was a old nigger man standing there in the front yard. Old Uncle Lias Sims. And he wouldn't even help my mother carry Uncle Rod in the house. Naw sir, he just turned around and ran. Niggers don't like to have nothin' to do with dead people."

"How come your Uncle Rod to get killed settin' on his front porch?" Doug enquired.

"He was so deaf he couldn't hear 'em shelling. The rest of the folks they all got down in the cellar, then somebody got to asking where Uncle Rod was. After it was over they went out on the front porch and there he was, settin' bolt up in his chair . . ."

"Dead?"

"Dead as a herring." Raeburn looked off across the field. "There's that man coming," he said, "but he ain't got no ladder. How long you reckon he expects us to work? It'll be gettin' dark pretty soon."

"Must be past seven o'clock," Doug said. "I ain't going to work no longer."

The man came up just as Doug was climbing out of the ice house. He was panting and his round face wore a harassed look. "Them folks didn't have no ladder," he said, "more'n that they sent me off on a fool errant . . . said the Widow Hickman might have a ladder. And when I get to where they say the Widow Hickman lives there ain't nothing but an old house looks like nobody ain't lived in it these thirty years. . . . Either you boys ever hear of the Widow Hickman?"

"I don't know many folks over this way," Doug said. He laid his pick up against a tree. "Well," he said, "I reckon it's about quittin' time."

The man took a leather wallet from his pocket and counted silver out into their hands. "I don't believe I'll be needin' you boys tomorrow, after all," he said.

Doug stood looking at him a minute as if he wasn't sure he'd heard right, then he said, "Suit yourself," and started off across the field. Raeburn ran and caught up with him at the edge of the woods.

"I thought you said he wanted us to work three, four days, Doug. I thought you said he wanted us to get *all* of them skeletons out of that ice house?"

"Hunh," Doug said.

He stopped and looked about him a minute, then turned off into the woods. Raeburn stood there waiting. When Doug did not come back he whistled, the soft, low whistle that they used for calling each other. Doug's head appeared suddenly over a clump of buckberry bushes. "Shh!" he said and beckoned Raeburn to come.

Raeburn made his way through the bushes. Doug was lying flat on his stomach behind the buckberries. Raeburn lay down beside him.

"What you doing this for?" he whispered.

Doug pushed a spray of buckberry a little to one side. "Look at that," he said.

The man was standing with his back to them. In front of the coffins. He had his hat off. They could see his bald head and the fringe of gray hair that came down on his blue shirt collar. He put his hand up and scratched his bald head, then he leaned over and lifted some bones out of one of the coffins. He held them in his hands a minute as if he didn't know what to do with them, then he laid them in one of the boxes farther down the line. He kept on doing this until he had put some bones in each of the empty boxes. Then he began fastening the lids and hammering them down.

"What you reckon he's doing, Doug?" Raeburn said.

Doug put his lips up close to Raeburn's ear. "He's dividing up them skeletons," he whispered. "He's dividing up them skeletons so he can git paid double."

He got to his feet and slipped off silently through the underbrush. Raeburn followed him. When they came to where the paths forked Doug stopped. "There ain't a whole man in ary one of them boxes," he said. He slapped his leg and rocked with laughter.

"If that ain't a Yankee fer ye!"

Caroline Gordon

RETREAT

ONCE more the crystal whisper of canister over
ravines of jagg'd glass, the forgotten idiot hold
of teeth into reddening earth : Shiloh : the
artillerist thinned in the drift of seventy years
sights yet with stiff eyes, stands to the lanyard, cheers
echoes of echo still
(Shiloh, Cold
Harbour, Malvern Hill . . .)
fraiIly
hailing down from shift of grey above
the roofs, frailly, muttering *Remember*
taps that deathlier rain, talks
in the frozen thunder of your arteries locked
under december
(Shiloh, Malvern Hill : you
long after drum and rain, you shored
from winter in sleepy death, you, lover
of Purcell and the warm strings,
you beautiful and old.)

DUDLEY FITTS

RAINER MARIA RILKE

II

THE ELEGIES

I

WHEN the *Notebooks* were finished, Rilke wrote:

> Can you understand that I have stayed behind this book like one who has lived past his time . . . The further I wrote the more I felt that somehow it would make an epoch — a high watershed. But now it has proved that all the water has poured down the other side and I am left to be consumed by drought . . . I have had the foolhardiness to put all my capital into a lost thing . . . On the other hand its value could only come out of this bankruptcy and I remember that for a long time Malte appeared to me not so much a destruction as a dark ascension into a distant and abandoned part of Heaven.

The Elegies are that distant and abandoned place. So distant that he took twelve sterile years before he understood it enough to write about it. And what was this place? Two years before the *Notebooks* were completed he had written to his wife:

> Artistic contemplation must have conquered itself to the point of recognizing a being in what is terrifying and even in what seems to be repulsive — a being that has the same value as all other being. And as no choice is left to the creative artist, neither is it permissible for him to turn away from any existence; at any time one single act of neglect will remove him from the state of grace and make him entirely sinful. . . . The book of Malte Laurids Brigge, when it is written, will be sim-

> ply the book of this point of view stated in relation to one for whom it was too huge. (Letters, 1905–1907, p. 393.)

Was it also too huge for Rilke — this impartiality that he was ascending to? There must have been many times in the next twelve years when he wondered if he too, like Malte, had not failed. Unfortunately the published letters do not yet go beyond 1907, so that we have no clear picture of him during that time. We know that the war exiled him from France and that, being unfit for military service, he was drafted for government press-work in Vienna. In a very confused little book, Frau Salome, one of his oldest friends, gives us some glimpses of him as he then was — of the tortured sensibility of one whose only refuge was in writing and yet who for years could not write at all. Though his influence on people was always that of an adviser and even a leader, his friendships gave him no comfort. "His humanity," Frau Salome writes, "was, apart from his art, a thing of vast dimensions. Through the holes and patches of his own despair an inner magnitude was visible which gave one courage." And there are many other testimonies of the love which people had for him both in France and Germany; but the love of others was always to him as to Malte a kind of slavery from which he had to escape. After the war and for the rest of his life he lived in an almost constant solitude.

In December, 1921, some friends had made it possible for him to live in the Château de Muzot in Switzerland. "A tiny castle," writes Valéry, in an article for *Les Cahiers du Mois* of 1923, "terribly alone in a vast scene of dreary mountains. I could not have imagined such an isolated existence and such an excessive intimacy with silence. Dear Rilke, you seemed to be living in pure time. I feared the regularity of life for you in which death shone through the identity of the days. But how innocent of me to pity you." And apparently he was as happy there as he was capable of being. His poetic faculty had begun to focus again. Whatever the tortures he had gone through, his suffering was to bear fruit. Perhaps the translation of Valéry's poetry helped him, for soon after he had finished that task he found himself able to coördinate material that he had long been collecting. Both the *Sonnets to Orpheus* and the *Elegies of Duino* were the products of this new activity. But as these two sequences were written together it is only necessary to speak of the more important one.

Whatever the sufferings Rilke may have endured, they have here borne fruit in poems of a force that outstrips all his former writing. In fact, as one looks through his earlier works, it is inconceivable that the author of the first verse, of the *Stories of God* or even of the *Book of Pictures*, could ever have attained the stature that is here apparent. It is difficult to describe them or to give any consecutive account of the subjects they treat. I have said that the *Book of Hours* and the *Notebooks* each represent a search for God. In the *Elegies* Rilke is no longer searching, because he has now found all that is necessary to him in the possible immortality of man's spirit. I say possible, because it is clear that to Rilke immortality was only for a few: for those whom he calls heroes, and for those who die young — that is, for those who have escaped the slavery of worldly standards which must necessarily kill the soul.

There is at the base of these poems a metaphysics that is never entirely explained. Perhaps when the letters of this later period are published we shall know it better. The immortality he here speaks of was implied in all his earlier work by the importance he there gave to death; but in the

Elegies this belief becomes a more exact and complicated conception, into which he has fitted all his spiritual experience. It has above all been fused with his belief both in the perfection of childhood and in the supreme importance of sorrow. Childhood, sorrow, and the death that may lead to immortality, have now become the permanent values that lie at the vanishing point of all human perspective. It is from this point of view that he now makes his analysis of earthly life.

Like the *Book of Hours* the *Elegies* are abstract in subject: but the metaphysics is now so closely fitted to experience that, though still obscure, it is no longer vague. Perhaps it is obscure, only because, more than ever, Rilke is talking to himself. He has now lived so long with his perceptions that he sometimes refers to them with phrases that represent only the parts or shadows of things long familiar. The tender, ghastly and fantastic figures of the *Notebooks* have disappeared, leaving in their place only the realizations that they stood for. His love and compassion, and all the scattered horror of his fears, have become a single reality. The Russian, Scandinavian and French influences have disappeared. There is no flavor of locality. He is dealing now with the world of man's essential life, a world where only the unchanging currents of our being flow around us, and where the tension is undistracted. This tension first appears in the compelling and haunting music of the verse, and then gradually, as we come to understand it, in the power and sequence of his thoughts — thoughts that unfold as ferns do in the spring until all the intricate frond is spread out before us and nothing is out of place. A deep emotion has fused the music with the thought.

I am now talking of Rilke as a poet, a subject that was barred on the first page of this article, but in the *Elegies* the poet and the man have become indistinguishable. "I must one day," he once wrote,

> "succeed in making things — and not plastic, but written things. Then will troubles and voices be settled for me, and then even what is inimical will blend into my work as sounds become a part of a dream and lead it gently on into the unexpected." (Letters, 1902–1905, p. 119.)

That is what he has now done in the *Elegies*.

To remove all human preoccupation and to fix a standard of being higher than man's, he has chosen to address his song to the angels, to the angels who in the *Book of Hours* are "high and far away where light runs out . . . the last swaying of God's highest branch" . . . to whom the light we know is a dream they may sometimes have. These spirits are infinitely remote and sinister, and yet are necessary in order to bridge the gulf between man and the dark power of God. Like the angels of Saint Thomas they have, in uncorrupted form, that being which is so imperfect in us, so transitory and impotent.

> For beauty is only the dawn of a terror
> hardly to be endured, which, unconcerned
> and caring not to wreak so small a ruin,
> permits our wonder.[1]

It is they who will receive us if we survive our death, and even in life there are moments when we are conscious of them.

This world of angels is on one boundary of man's consciousness. On the other lies the inarticulate world of beasts and plants and stones — a world that is not conscious of death, that stands as the angels do in the fullness of being. Man's existence lacks the completeness of both these worlds: we, who would be destroyed by contact with the angels, are also those who

---

[1] Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäht,
uns zu zerstören.
(1st Elegy)

never, for a single day, can know
that sheer space into which flowers endlessly rise.[2]

Man's only solidity is childhood, his only certainty death, and his only essential attribute that sorrow which is

our life's evergreen
our senses' darkest leaf
one season of our secret year
and more, a colony,
a camp for us, a floor, a dwelling place.[3]

But though this is the truth only a few live according to it. These few are either those who die before the world can give them false values or else the heroes.

The hero is very important in Rilke's world. He is the one who remains eternally young and undistracted because he is "immovably centred." He is what Rilke hoped to find in Rodin, and did find in Cézanne; one who

does not care to endure, whose ascent is in being;
who, through shifting constellations
of a constant danger, moves undeterred.[4]

---

[2] wir haben nie, nicht einen einzigen Tag,
den reinen Raum vor uns, in den die Blumen
unendlich aufgehn.
(8th Elegy)

[3] unser winterwähriges Laub, unser dunkeles Sinngrün,
eine der Zeiten des heimlichen Jahres —, nicht nur
Zeit —, sind Stelle, Siedelung, Lager, Boden, Wohnort.
(10th Elegy)

[4] Dauern
ficht ihn nicht an. Sein Aufgang ist Dasein; beständig

One might identify the hero with the Christian saint if Rilke did not feel, as he says in the *Book of Hours*, that the saints lived more for the sake of eternal reward than for the immediate urgency of their love. Actually the only reward saints seek is the manifestation of God's love, but to Rilke the search for a divine love, even could he have believed in it, implied a limitation.

The hero and child are as remote from ordinary men as angels are, or beasts:

> We so easily forget all that our laughing neighbor
> does not envy or confirm.
> We must flaunt all our joys — though the most tangible
> are savored secretly and inwardly transformed.[5]

Lovers have, to be sure, moments of sheer being, but they hide it from each other because all human intercourse seems designed to hide it.

II

The ten *Elegies* take us through every manifestation of this conjectured reality. Each elegy is like a new facet of his perception, and, though such poems cannot be described, the following summaries may serve as a guide to those who are reading them for the first time.

---

nimmt er sich fort und tritt ins veränderte Sternbild
seiner steten Gefahr.
(6th Elegy)

[5] Nur, wir vergessen so leicht, was der lachende Nachbar
uns nicht bestätigt oder beneidet. Sichtbar
wollen wirs heben, wo doch das sichtbarste Glück uns
erst zu erkennen sich gibt, wenn wir es innen verwandeln.
(7th Elegy)

RAINER MARIA RILKE

I ELEGY

We can find consolation neither in angels nor in men, even lovers cannot be comforted:

Ah me: They who hide thus in one another's arms
are but concealing fate.
Have you not understood?
Cast this hollowness into the spaces of breath;
there it will ease perhaps the flight of birds.

Or it may be spring needs you, or some star
calls for your contemplation; or
a wave of bygone time may seek you out —
or, from an opened window, fiddle music. . . .
This was your mandate.
Have you accomplished it?
Are you not always distracted with expectation
as though all things announced your love's arrival?[6]

And what is this human love that is so transitory, and these lovers that must be reabsorbed by the earth?

Shall not these oldest sorrows yield us, at last, more fruit?
Is it not time to love, and yet to be free
of that which we love, and, though trembling, to resist?

---

[6] Ach, sie verdecken sich nur miteinander ihr Los.
Weiszt du's noch nicht? Wirf aus den Armen die Leere
zu den Räumen hinzu, die wir atmen; vielleicht dass die Vögel
die erweiterte Luft fühlen mit innigerm Flug.

Ja, die Frühlinge brauchten dich wohl. Es muteten manche
Sterne dir zu, dass du sie spürtest. Es hob
sich eine Woge heran im Vergangenen, oder
da du vorüberkamst am geöffneten Fenster,
gab eine Geige sich hin. Das alles war Auftrag.
Aber bewältigtest du's? Warst du nicht immer
noch von Erwartung zerstreut, als kündigte alles
eine Geliebte dir an?

As resisting the bowstring, an arrow is gathered
to spring into more than itself. For rest is nowhere.[7]

Other voices also call us which we can hear if we listen well
. . . the voices of the young dead who need our help:

For to be dead is difficult
and haunted by lost hours, until,
gradually, a little of Eternity is perceived.[8]

To those who die young a time will come at last
when they need us no longer. They are weaned
as gently from earth as we from our mother's breast.
But we who need such vast secrets,
we, for whom sorrow leads often to blessed advance,
How can we live without them?
Is the legend in vain
that once in the weeping for Linos
a brave first harmony broke through the starkness of death?
And there, in a shaken space whence a half God had vanished,
the emptiness filled with a heartbeat
that even now lifts us and comforts and helps.[9]

---

[7] Sollen nicht endlich uns diese ältesten Schmerzen
fruchtbarer werden? Ist es nicht Zeit, dass wir liebend
uns vom Geliebten befrein und es bebend bestehn:
wie der Pfeil die Sehne besteht, um gesammelt im Absprung
mehr zu sein als er selbst. Denn Bleiben ist nirgends.

[8] Und das Totsein ist mühsam
und voller Nachholn, dass man allmählich ein wenig
Ewigkeit spürt.

[9] Schlieszlich brauchen sie uns nicht mehr, die Früheentrückten,
man entwöhnt sich des Irdischen sanft, wie man den Brüsten
milde der Mutter entwächst. Aber wir, die so grosse
Geheimnisse brauchen, denen aus Trauer so oft
seliger Fortschritt entspringt—: könnten wir sein ohne sie?
Ist die Sage umsonst, dass einst in der Klage um Linos
wagende erste Musik dürre Erstarrung durchdrang,
dass erst im erschrockenen Raum, dem ein beinah göttlicher Jüngling
plötzlich für immer enttrat, das Leere in jene
Schwingung geriet, die uns jetzt hinreisst und tröstet und hilft.

In this elegy Rilke states his whole conception of man's place in the world and the obscurities I have referred to are already apparent.

The first of these lies in the animism with which he invests not only the earth and sky but the seasons of the year and even the hours of the day and night. These things not only have need of man but understand him. In the ninth Elegy he will explain himself better; it is the possibility of immortality in man that makes him essential to the rest of creation.

> These that live by passing understand
> your praise, and, in their passing, trust us
> that we save them —
> we most transitory. They desire
> to be transformed into our unseen hearts
> and made — oh, without end — a part of us,
> whoever we finally may be![10]

The second obscurity lies in Rilke's idea of our relation to the *Früheentrückten*, those who are early snatched away. He only makes it clear that the slight imperfection of their lives is something we must remedy, that they may detach themselves completely from earth. It is a conception akin to that of purgatory. But, even more important than the help we give them, is the sorrow they cause us and which we need. Their death is the eternal sorrow that feeds the heart of man, as in Greek legend the mourning over the death of Linos was the origin of music.

---

[10] Und diese, von Hingang
lebenden Dinge verstehn, dass du sie rühmst: vergänglich,
traun sie ein Rettendes uns, den Vergänglischsten, zu.
Wollen, wir sollen sie ganz im unsichtbarn Herzen verwandeln
in — o unendlich — in uns! wer dir am Ende auch seien.
(IX Elegy)

II ELEGY

The first Elegy places man so low in the scale of being that no one among the angelic hosts can hear a human cry. Yet in the second the poet nevertheless addresses himself to those "almost deadly birds of the soul." They alone have perfection of being, and are therefore alone worthy of a poet's song.

> We evaporate in sensation, we breathe ourselves out and away;
>
> . . . . .
>
> And where do smiles go, and the look of an eye:
> that new, warm, outgoing wave of a heart?[11]

He seeks to find what experience of being may belong to lovers — alas

> Lifted to each others' lips
> and set there — drink lifted to drink —
> the drinker escapes.[12]

Memories of the apparent perfections of man's past begin and end this elegy. In the first page we have the story of Tobias who survived the visit of an angel, whereas:

> Should the archangel, the perilous one, now
> step down from behind the stars, one step downwards —
> the wild beat of our own hearts would kill us.[13]

---

[11] ach wir
atmen uns aus und dahin;

. . . . .

O Lächeln, wohin? O Aufschaun:
neue, warme, entgehende Welle des Herzens —

[12] Wenn ihr einer dem andern
euch an den Mund hebt und ansetzt —: Getränk an Getränk:
o wie entgeht dann der Trinkende seltsam der Handlung.

[13] Träte der Erzengel jetzt, der gefährliche, hinter den Sternen
eines Schrittes nur nieder und herwärts: hochaufschlagend erschlüg uns das eigene Herz.

In contrast to this the poem closes with the human completeness once achieved by the Greeks.

> Do you not marvel on the Attic gravestones?
> At the prudence they have traced in human gestures?
> Do not love and parting lie upon those shoulders
> more lightly than on ours? Were they made
> of other substance? Remember too how lightly
> despite the bodies' strength those fingers touch.
> Therein were they the masters. Ah, we never
> (such is our lot) can touch each other thus.[14]

III ELEGY

This elegy is devoted entirely to another aspect of the past. The second sang of a legendary past of the race; here we have the far darker and yet more immediate past of the body. It is the song of ancestry, of

> that river-god of our blood,
> who is hidden and guilty.[15]

The love that man feels for woman comes to him from the stars, but that is not the only love he knows. Neither mother nor beloved

> could have so stretched the curve of his eyebrows
> with longing.[16]

---

[14] Erstaunte nicht auf attischen Stelen die Vorsicht
menschlicher Geste? war nicht Liebe und Abschied
so leicht auf die Schultern gelegt, als wär es aus anderm
Stoffe gemacht als bei uns? Gedenkt euch der Hände,
wie sie drucklos beruhen, obwohl in den Torsen die Kraft steht.
Diese Beherrschten wussten damit: so weit sind wirs,
dieses ist unser, uns so zu berühren.

[15] jenen verborgenen schuldigen Fluss-Gott des Bluts.

[16] Du nicht hast ihm, wehe, nicht seine Mutter
hat ihm die Bogen der Brau'n so zur Erwartung gespannt.

It is the infinitely ancient life in his own veins that has done this, and that makes him, like the "prodigal son," so "terribly difficult to love." He is isolated in this inner world and none can lure him altogether from that "dark ambience." Already in the sleep of childhood,

> How he let himself go and how entangled already
> this new shy thing had become . . .[17]
>
> . . . . .
>
> Oh maiden, this thing that we love in ourselves
> is no single thing;
> and nothing that is still to come;
> but an incalculable seething,
> not one child, but all those sires
> who lie engulfed in us like ruined hills;
> and the dry river-bed of former mothers . . .[18]

All the beloved can do is to be gentle and patient and to let her lover feel the ascendancy of night. This is one of the few references in these poems to the divine darkness of the *Book of Hours*, the night in which the insistence of our blood can be obliterated, and even the secret terrors — which were so important to Rilke and so real that they could only cease in the night of unconsciousness.

IV ELEGY

Just as there is no moment of solidity in the flux of life, there is no shape, no constancy, no succession of seasons in our emotions. We cannot trust them to occupy us. The stage of our heart is always set for a tawdry scene of parting, and the dancer who appears there is so ill-disguised that we cannot forget he is no dancer at all. Rather than the half pretence of these emotions, it is well to turn to puppets — those works of artifice that are better than half-filled masks, for they are wholly stuffed. This is a subterfuge, but none will understand it better now than the father

---

[17] wie er sich einliess.
Er, der Neue, Scheuende, wie er verstrickt war,

[18] O Mädchen,
dies: dass wir liebten in uns, nicht Eines, ein Künftiges, sondern
das zahllos Brauende; nicht ein einzelnes Kind,
sondern die Väter, die wie Trümmer Gebirgs
uns im Grunde beruhn; sondern das trockene Flussbett
einstiger Mütter —

to whom on my account life tasted so bitter[19]

or those who loved him as a child.

who loved me for my small beginnings
of love for you; from which I always wandered
because the little space I loved in you
even as I regarded your countenance had already
merged into world space
where you no longer were . . .[20]

And to this puppet stage, if we sit long enough before it, an angel may come to lift the mannikins. Here I think we have an inkling of the meaning that angels had for Rilke. They represent that supernatural world which man sometimes experiences through no effort of his own. Perhaps theologians would have called it the infusion of grace, but to Rilke it was his own poetic inspirations. In those moments reality reappeared to him as he had seen it in childhood. But what is the reality of childhood?

---

[19] Du, der um mich so bitter
das Leben schmeckte

[20] die ihr mich liebtet für den kleinen Anfang
Liebe zu euch, von dem ich immer abkam,
weil mir der Raum in eurem Angesicht,
da ich ihn liebte, überging in Weltraum,
in dem ihr nicht mehr wart . . .

> Who can show us a child as he is?
> Who puts him among the stars and places
> in his hands the measure of unlikeness?
> Who makes a child's death of a grey bread that hardens,
> or leaves it growing like an apple core
> in his round mouth?
> Murder can be conceived; but this —
> to include death and all of death
> as gently in him, and before life starts,
> and without malice — this is unspeakable.[21]

Here we have the trinity of childhood and sorrow and death the only realities in a world of subterfuge.

V ELEGY

In this song, devoted to the mysterious imperfections of human love, we find one of the best examples of an important quality in Rilke. He combined a reverence for the spiritual significance of all natural functions with a precision as objective as that of a scientist, and out of that combination he was able to make delicate poetry of subjects that seem more appropriate to physiology. We find the same achievement in other parts of the *Elegies* and also in the *Notebooks* and the *New Poems*, but perhaps most of all in an earlier work called *Requiem für eine Freundin* in which he analyses the conception of a child.

---

[21] Wer zeigt ein Kind, so wie es steht? Wer stellt
es ins Gestirn und gibt das Mass des Abstands
ihm ins die Hand? Wer macht den Kindertod
aus grauem Brot, das hart wird, — oder lässt
ihn drin im runden Mund so wie den Gröps
von einem schönen Apfel? . . . Mörder sind
leicht einzusehen. Aber dies: den Tod,
den ganzen Tod, noch vor dem Leben so
sanft zu enthalten und nicht bös zu sein,
ist unbeschreiblich.

> Knowest thou how thy blood,
> hesitating in its matchless orbit, came
> unwillingly in answer to thy call?
> And how it in bewilderment began
> the little circles of another body;[22]

This fifth elegy sings of "the eternal leapings of the human seed on this threadbare carpet of our love," of the seed

> that with the impact of dropping fruit
> unripely falls by the hundred,
> falls daily from the tree of concerted action,
> (that tree which in a few minutes, faster than water can flow,
> knows spring, summer and autumn.)[23]

The functions of lover and beloved are analysed in alternating stanzas and their futility is symbolized by the image which runs all through the poem — of a circus.

> Where, oh where is the place —
> I carry it in my heart —
> the place of their impotence,
> where they fall asunder,
> overleaping each other,
> being ill-mated beasts;
> where the weights are still heavy;
> where the idle, flourishing wands still set the
> plates spinning. . . .

---

[22] Weisst du wie dein Blut
aus einem Kreisen ohnegleichen zögernd
und ungern wiederkam, da du es abriefst?
Wie es vereirrt des Leibes kleinen Kreislauf
noch einmal aufnahm;
(Vol. V, p. 328)

[23] Du, der mit dem Aufschlag,
wie nur Früchte ihn kennen, unreif
täglich hundert Mal abfällt von Baum der gemeinsam
erbauten Bewegung, (der, rascher als Wasser, in wenig
Minuten Lenz, Sommer und Herbst hat) —

Angel: there may be a place we ignore, where
on unimaginable carpets, lovers,
so impotent here, can show
the brave high face of their longing, their
towers of lust,
and their precarious ladders leaning
where no floor ever was,
against each other. . . .[24]

VI ELEGY

To me, oh fig tree, it has long been significant
That you should thus almost wholly envelop your blooming[24a]

This elegy must remain very obscure to those who do not know that the flower and fruit of this tree are indistinguishable. It is called by botanists a hollow inflorescence, fertilized by the entrance of a wasp through the small 'eye' of the ripe fig. Here it becomes the symbol of the perfect life that blooms and ripens without worldly distraction, and so is concentrated entirely on maturing itself.

---

[24] Wo, o wo ist der Ort, — ich trag ihn im Herzen —,
wo sie noch lange nicht konnten, noch voneinander
abfieln, wie sich bespringende, nicht recht
paarige Tiere; —
wo die Gewichte noch schwer sind;
wo noch von ihren vergeblich
wirbelnden Stäben die Teller
torkeln. . . .

Engel: es wäre ein Platz, den wir nicht wissen, und dorten,
auf unsäglichem Teppich, zeigten die Liebenden, die's hier
bis zum Können nie bringen, ihre kühnen
hohen Figuren des Herzschwungs,
ihre Türme aus Lust, ihre
längst, wo Boden nie war, nur aneinander
lehnenden Leitern, bebend. . . .

[24a] Feigenbaum, seit wie lange schon ists mir bedeutend,
wie du die Blüte beinah ganz überschlägst

While we must linger
and ah! find glory in blooming,
and are but snared at last
into the retarded centre
of our seed.[25]

Only a few men ripen as directly and perfectly as this exceptional fruit.

Heroes perhaps and those
marked for an early transition,
whose veins have been bent thereunto
by our gardener, Death.[26]

This way seemed natural enough to us in childhood when "sitting propped in the arms of the future" we read of such heroes as Samson. That was the perfection of childhood and now, alas, we know that greatness is predestined.

For the hero rushed upon us through love's dallying (that is, out of a showy blossoming)

Every heartbeat signified him, called him out,
and already with averted face he was there, standing
at the end of the smiling, already different.[27]

VII ELEGY

The fatalism of the sixth elegy is here contradicted or empered by a plea for human achievement. Not for the blind chievement of love and worldly activity, but for the achievement of our inner life, which alone is real, and which moreover will comfort those who love us and be understood also by the earth and sky.

---

[25] Wir aber verweilen,
ach, uns rühmt es zu blühn, und ins verspätete Innre
unserer endlichen Frucht gehn wir verraten hinein.

[26] Helden vielleicht und den frühe Hinüberbestimmten,
denen der gärtnernde Tod anders die Adern verbiegt.

[27] Denn hinstürmte der Held durch Aufenthalte der Liebe,
jeder hob ihn hinaus, jeder ihn meinende Herzschlag,
abgewendet schon, stand er am Ende der Lächeln, anders.

> No world is real, beloved, but this inner one.
> Our life flows by in changes —
> all that surrounds us shrinks and fades away.
> See: where a lasting house stood once, a cloudy form
> all brain-concocted rises on our path.[28]

The storehouses of power that our age makes are shapeless things. We have forgotten how to build temples.

> Such heart squanderings
> are now economized and put away
> more secretly.[29]

. . . and to less advantage. But there was a time when men embodied their lives in things which could outlast them: in temples and churches and statues.

> Here's a thing that stood once among men,
> in the centre of obliterating fate,
> in the midst of 'I-know-not-whither' it stood once,
> as though it were, and out of Heaven's peace
> bent down the stars — oh, Angel,
> to you I still can show this thing,
> and there in your contemplation let it stand,
> finally preserved.
> The columns of Greece or the Sphinx

---

[28] Nirgends, Geliebte, wird Welt sein, als innen. Unser
Leben geht hin mit Verwandlung. Und immer geringer
schwindet das Aussen. Wo einmal ein dauerndes Haus war,
schlägt sich erdachtes Gebild vor, quer, zu Erdenklichem
völlig gehörig, als stănd es noch ganz im Gehirne.

[29] Diese, des Herzens, Verschwendung
sparen wir heimlicher ein.

or, grown grey in some half-ruined or unfriendly town,
the straining thrusts of a cathedral.[30]

This appeal to the angel continues in a long passage that might have been a prayer if it did not end in a note of defiance. It is inevitable that the angel see and so preserve forever these true expressions of our earthly life; but this must not be thought to interfere with the independence of man's being.

You must not think, oh Angel, that I court you.
And even did I court, you could not come.
You cannot come, my call tells you to go;
against this current you can make no headway.
My call is like an outstretched arm, my hand
up there — that is open and ready to clutch — is a threat
to you and a warning, oh Unseizable.[31]

n this passage we measure the change in Rilke since the ays of the *Stundenbuch.* The religiosity of the early work has ere grown into a clearly defined metaphysical conviction hat leaves no room for piety — is in fact inimical to it ecause piety involves a dependence on the divine. That this attitude was an immensely difficult achievement appears in the emotion that flares up throughout the poem. One cannot help feeling that Rilke is here forever renouncing what he had always hoped to find, and that in its place he takes what comfort he can in the animism with which he invests inorganic creation.

---

[30] Dies stand einmal unter Menschen,
mitten im Schicksal stands, im vernichtenden, mitten
im Nichtwissen-Wohin stand es, wie seiend, und bog
Sterne zu sich aus gesicherten Himmeln. Engel,
dir noch zeig ich es, da! in deinem Anschaun
steh es gerettet zuletzt, nun endlich aufrecht.
Säulen, Pylone, der Sphinx, das strebende Stemmen,
grau aus vergehender Stadt oder aus fremder, des Doms.

[31] Glaub nicht, dass ich werbe.
Engel, und würb ich dich auch! Du kommst nicht. Denn mein
Anruf ist immer voll Hinweg; wider so starke
Strömung kannst du nicht schreiten. Wie ein gestreckter
Arm ist mein Rufen. Und seine zum Greifen
oben offene Hand bleibt vor dir
offen, wie Abwehr und Warnung,
Unfasslicher, weit auf.

VIII ELEGY

This elegy is devoted to the world of beasts, to which Rilke gives the same tender concreteness that we find in his descriptions of childhood. Except for the flight of the bat, the beasts are described here, as is almost everything in these poems, from the inside. Yet it is the triumph of this art that the abstract disquisition to which the subject can be reduced is always given the warmth and movement of life. The first half of the elegy is devoted to the advantages of the animal over man — the animal whose existence

> is unlimited, uncomprehended,
> without perspective on its own predicament,
> as simple as his vision.[32]

But in the second half this advantage is found to be unequally distributed among them, for

> in the warm and wakeful beast
> there is also the weight and the obsession
> of vast sorrow.
> That which overpowers us has clung also to him,
> the memory of what has sometime been,
> towards which we tend and which was nearer once
> and more reliable and infinitely tender.

---

[32] Doch sein Sein ist ihm
unendlich, ungefasst und ohne Blick
auf seinen Zustand, rein, so wie sein Ausblick.

There this disparity was only breathing.
And, after that first home, this second
is a bastard thing and windy.[33]

It is only insects that can be called happy because they alone live out their life in the womb that bore them.

And see, the bird — in half security —
has almost understood his double nature,
as though he were a dead Etruscan's soul,
penned in a small place, but on the lid
a resting figure. And see how troubled
is this one who flies,
though born out of a womb. He darts about
as though he feared himself; and splits the air.
Like cracks across a cup the bat's flight splits
the porcelain of evening.[34]

This freakish beast brings us to man again, who is even more anomalous.

---

[33] Und doch ist in dem wachsam warmen Tier
Gewicht und Sorge einer grossen Schwermut.
Denn ihm auch haftet immer an, was uns
oft überwältigt, — die Erinnerung,
als sei schon einmal das, wonach man drängt,
näher gewesen, treuer und sein Anschluss
unendlich zärtlich. Hier ist alles Abstand,
und dort wars Atem. Nach der ersten Heimat
ist ihm die zweite zwitterig und windig.

[34] Und sieh die halbe Sicherheit des Vogels,
der beinah beides weiss aus seinem Ursprung,
als wär er eine Seele der Etrusker,
aus einem Toten, den ein Raum empfing,
doch mit der ruhenden Figur als Deckel.
Und wie bestürzt ist eins, das fliegen muss
und stammt aus einem Schooss. Wie vor sich selbst
erschreckt, durchzuckts die Luft, wie wenn ein Sprung
durch eine Tasse geht. So reisst die Spur
der Fledermaus durchs Porzellan des Abends.

And we onlookers turned to everything,
but never towards escape.
Everything floods us. We arrange it all.
It falls apart. We set it right again
and fall apart ourselves.
Who has turned us so about that we do all
with a gesture of departure?
As the mountain climber when he reaches
the last view of his own valley
turns, pauses and lingers —
So we live, forever taking leave.[35]

IX ELEGY

In this, Rilke, as has been said, explains man's relations to the whole inarticulate world. This explanation, of which a part has already been quoted, comes in answer to the beautiful question of the first lines, a question that touches the root of the relation between art and ethics.

Why, since we are allowed to spend in laurel
this interval of being — laurel darker
than any other green, and curled a little
on each leaf's rim as by a smiling wind —
why then this human task? — and why,
shunning our fate, do we still long for it?[36]

---

[35] Und wir: Zuschauer, immer, überall,
dem allen zugewandt und nie hinaus!
Uns überfüllts. Wir ordnens. Es zerfällt.
Wir ordnens wieder und zerfallen selbst.
Wer hat uns also umgedreht, dass wir,
was wir auch tun, in jener Haltung sind
von einem, welcher fortgeht? Wie er auf
dem letzten Hügel, der ihm ganz sein Tal
noch einmal zeigt, sich wendet, anhält, weilt —,
so leben wir und nehmen immer Abschied.

[36] Warum, wenn es angeht, also die Frist des Daseins
hinzubringen, als Lorbeer, ein wenig dunkler als alles
andere Grün, mit kleinen Wellen an jedem

In the seventh elegy the creations of man's inner life appear as his only means of salvation. In the ninth these same creations also become the saving of the earth and of all that reaches our consciousness. There is here the same intensity of emotion, the same mood of prayer that we found in the earlier poem; but here it is no longer broken by a gesture of defiance, because he is now addressing the earth. No gulf separates him from her, and she has need of him to be herself immortalized. This immortality is not to be brought about by any immediate emotions, as by grief or love, but by the act of creating those simple things that man makes out of all the fluctuations of experience. Man's creations express his double nature and these in their material form hold a purer distillation of his life than any direct feeling he is capable of. It is the spiritualizing of matter. This was Rilke's chief concern and it was this that lay behind his deification of the artist, his love of Rodin, Cézanne, Leonardo, Hokusai and many others, and also behind the tenderness with which he refers to the simple objects of daily life. It was also on this account that he wrote so many things about hands, for hands are the tools of the spirit and the symbols of all creative activity.

> Hands that go alone on their way, wherever it may lead, that become anxious, hesitate, and then are happy again, and go on and on, far below the face that is like a star over them and does not see for them, but only shines. (Letters, 1903.)

The hands are closer to the earth than the uncreating face. It is through them that the earth will be saved because, if man's spirit enters the matter his hands are working with,

---

Blattrand (wie eines Windes Lächeln) —: warum dann
Menschliches müssen — und, Schicksal vermeidend
sich sehnen nach Schicksal?

matter in turn becomes a part of the human spirit and can thus be eternalized. The ninth elegy ends in a vow of eternal service to the earth.

> Earth, is not this your wish: to rise again
> invisible in us? Is not your dream to be
> some day invisible? An Earth invisible!
> What else this hard-pressed mandate
> but to effect this change?
> Oh Earth, dear Earth, I will; nor do I need
> another of your Aprils to persuade me
> since one alone is more than blood can stand.
> I still unnamed belonged to you, long since.
> You have been always right and kindly death
> is your own holy fancy.[37]

X ELEGY

> I pray, when the grim judgment is over,
> that I to the angel's assenting
> sing triumph and joy;
> that the clear rung beats of my heart
> may strike on the lyre,
> nor miss one gentle, hesitating
> or impetuous note;
> that my streaming countenance
> add to the shining; that my unseen weeping
> may flower.[38]

---

[37] Erde, ist es nicht dies, was du willst: unsichtbar
in uns erstehn? — Ist es dein Traum nicht,
einmal unsichtbar zu sein? — Erde! unsichtbar!
Was, wenn Verwandlung nicht, ist dein drängender Auftrag?
Erde, du liebe, ich will. O glaub, es bedürfte
nicht deiner Frühlinge mehr, mich dir zu gewinnen, einer,
ach, ein einziger ist schon dem Blute zu viel.
Namenlos bin ich zu dir entschlossen, von weit her.
Immer warst du im Recht, und dein heiliger Einfall
ist der vertrauliche Tod.

[38] Dass ich dereinst, an dem Ausgang der grimmigen Einsicht,
Jubel und Ruhm aufsinge zustimmenden Engeln.

These opening lines are his act of hope in immortality, the holy spirit of Rilke's trinity, in whom all becomes possible, in whom childhood is found again and sorrow is seen to be the substance of all life. From this high place he describes the panorama of earthly existence, the perpetual County Fair of false values.

> Seesaws of liberty, jugglers of energy
> and the pretty, painted shooting-galleries of joy. . . .[39]

But beyond the confines of the Fair lies an unspoiled landscape that is for men only a leafy distance. It is the wide landscape of human woe whose beauty none may see but the young dead.

This elegy is the most symbolic of the ten and the most difficult to understand. It contains the same obscure doctrine of our relation to the young dead that is referred to in the first elegy. The land of sorrow is an earthly paradise occupied by the race of lamentations, a race that was once richer. They are the descendants of sibyls and soothsayers. One of them receives each boy who dies in

> that first state of timeless equanimity
> that follows weaning.[40]

A Lamentation leads him through the land

Dass von den klargeschlagenen Hämmern des Herzens
keiner versage an weichen, zweifelnden oder
reissenden Saiten. Dass mich mein strömendes Antlitz
glänzender mache: dass das unscheinbare Weinen
blühe.

[39] Schaukeln der Freiheit! Taucher und Gaukler des Eifers!
Und des behübschten Glücks figürliche Schiessstatt. . . .

[40] im ersten Zustand
zeitlosen Gleichmuts, dem der Entwöhnung,
folgen ihr liebend.

where once the princes of sorrow ruled well,
shows him the high weeping trees and the flowering
acres of sadness. . . .[41]

And as night falls she shows him the stars of their firmament and names them.

the rider, the staff,
and — there where the stars are thicker — one they call
the garland of fruit, and closer to the pole
the cradle, the road, the burning book,
the doll, the window, and in the southern sky
clear as on the palm of some holy hand
the shining M that is the sign of a mother.[42]

Having crossed the wide land they come to the head of a valley,

to the spring of joy.
Reverendly she names it, and says
among men this is a powerful stream.[43]

There the young dead boy is left to ascend alone "the mountains of our first woe" and the closing lines refer to the end of the first elegy — the weeping for Linos.

---

[41] wo Klage-Fürsten das Land
einstens weise beherrscht. Zeigt ihm die hohen
Tränenbäume und Felder blühender Wehmut. . . .

[42] den 'Reiter', den 'Stab', und das vollere Sternbild
nennen sie: 'Fruchtkranz'. Dann, weiter, dem Pol zu:
'Wiege', 'Weg', 'das brennende Buch', 'Puppe', 'Fenster'.
Aber im südlichen Himmel, rein wie im Innern
einer gesegneten Hand, das klar erglänzende 'M',
das die Mütter bedeutet.

[43] die Quelle der Freude. In Ehrfurcht
nennt sie sie, sagt: "Bei den Menschen
ist sie ein tragender Strom."

But should the eternally dead
ever appear in a likeness, it might be
that of a catkin on a leafless hazel,
or that of rain perhaps
on the dark earth of spring.
— And we who are intent on soaring joy
would feel the pang that almost shatters us
when a happy thing falls.[44]

Rilke's images are always so precise that he surely meant us to take all of this long elegy as an exact symbol of what he felt and believed: yet without further explanation it must remain obscure. There is an obviously female preponderance in this land of woe that may connect it with the mystery of Abelone. Does it perhaps represent what is immortal in women? We cannot be sure, and if it were not for the beauty of the lines, for the slow unfolding of a great landscape, perhaps we should not care. But it is a very compelling force that holds our attention riveted through these dark poems, and the images that we dismiss as incomprehensible will return to haunt us with their beauty; and then, often, we come suddenly to understand them so well that they will seem to have been always clear.

The obscurity in all the *Elegies* is inevitable because they lead us into ways that must be traveled alone. There is, as I have said, a dark complexity common to all serious modern art. With Joyce and Proust and many others it takes the form of an immensely complicated texture expressed in half coördinated facets of experience. They are aware of a multitude of shapes and voices that becomes as terrifying as "the eternal silences of infinite space," and the sense of tragedy they create is based on the presence of that silence behind the veil of their precisions.

---

[44] Aber erweckten sie uns, die unendlich Toten, ein Gleichnis,
siehe, sie zeigten vielleicht auf die Kätzschen der leeren
Hasel, die hängenden, oder
meinten den Regen, der fällt auf dunkles Erdreich im Frühjahr. —
Und wir, die an steigendes Glück
denken, empfänden die Rührung,
die uns beinah bestürzt,
wenn ein Glüchliches fällt.

Rilke is as conscious as they are of this multiplicity, but it never distracts him. More than ever in the *Elegies* he is obsessed by the possibility of finding unity in the dark underlying silence, a unity by which the discordant details might be harmonized. This was his obsession and the root of all his fears. His achievement lies in the courage with which he concentrated on it. He was always in that state which St. Augustine describes in the third book of his *Confessions:*

> "But I bent myself to those things that are contained in places, and there I found no place to rest in, nor did those places so entertain me that I could say: 'It is enough' and ''Tis well'; nor did they suffer me to turn back where I might find wellbeing enough."

With the persistence and unworldliness of all true contemplatives he sought for a place of contentment, and like them too he never found it. The Christian mystics are at least convinced of its existence, but one cannot be sure that Rilke ever was. His promise of service to Earth is an act of love and pity for creation and an act of faith in its beauty, but it also seems to be a despairing effort to piece together the vivid fragments of his perception — I say despairing, because in this attempted pattern the only convincing realities are those same fragments which he so well describes, whereas the connecting and unifying lines are only tentative. His achievement lies not in the pattern or system he gives us, but in the persistence with which he remained in a region where man faces the need of unity; and above all in the beauty of the images with which he has described that inarticulate place. One may say that the *Elegies* have no pattern other than that of Rilke's personality, but that has sufficed so well that we must ask for nothing more. They are the final expression of all that he could think or feel. The writing of them appears to have come about with a swiftness that proves every line to have been inevitable. They had been conceived many years before in Schloss Duino, to which they owe their name, but almost all the writing was done in two amazing weeks. When they were finished he told a friend that they had flowed into shape as bronze is poured into a mould.

The effort seems to have undermined his health and he never recovered. Two years later he died of chronic blood poisoning. He would take no anaesthetics for the torture attendant on his illness, because, as he told the doctors, this was his only death and he himself must be allowed to die it.

But more tragic than physical torture was the mental agony he must have gone through. His fears returned, now more hideous than ever. Frau Salome tells of a paper that has preserved for us his last writing. With pale pencil lines he traced a message of thanks to his friends for their care of him, and to his nurses and doctors. Below all this is the single phrase "*aber die hölle.*" What new reality was unfolding to him then, and did his poetry stand by him to conjure this last horror?

Little Malte once asked his mother if the makers of an old piece of lace "were not surely in Heaven" and his mother answered "In Heaven? I believe they are in the very heart of it. If one sees it so, that may well be eternal beatitude."

DIE DRITTE ELEGIE

Eines ist, die Geliebte zu singen. Ein anderes, wehe,
jenen verborgenen schuldigen Fluss-Gott des Bluts.
Den sie von weitem erkennt, ihren Jüngling, was weiss er
selbst von dem Herren der Lust, der aus dem Einsamen oft,
ehe das Mädchen noch linderte, oft auch als wäre sie nicht,
ach, von welchem Unkenntlichen triefend, das Gotthaupt
aufhob, aufrufend die Nacht zu unenlichem Aufruhr.
O des Blutes Neptun, o sein furchtbarer Dreizack.
O der dunkele Wind seiner Brust aus gewundener Muschel.
Horch, wie die Nacht sich muldet und höhlt. Ihr Sterne,
stammt nicht von euch des Liebenden Lust zu dem Antlitz
seiner Geliebten? Hat er die innige Einsicht
in ihr reines Gesicht nicht aus dem reinen Gestirn?

Du nicht hast ihm, wehe, nicht seine Mutter
hat ihm die Bogen der Brau'n so zur Erwartung gespannt.
Nicht an dir, ihn fühlendes Mädchen, an dir nicht
bog seine Lippe sich zum fruchtbarern Ausdruck.
Meinst du wirklich, ihn hätte dein leichter Auftritt
also erschüttert, du, die wandelt wie Frühwind?
Zwar du erschrakst ihm das Herz; doch ältere Schrecken
stürzten in ihn bei dem berührenden Anstoss.
Ruf ihn . . . du rufst ihn nicht ganz aus dunkelem Umgang.
Freilich, er will, er entspringt; erleichtert gewöhnt er

THIRD ELEGY OF DUINO

It is one thing to sing the beloved. Alas 'tis another
to proclaim that river-god of our blood
who is hidden and guilty.
A maiden knows her lover from afar;
but he, what does he know of the lord of desire?
What does he know of him who in solitude often
— before the girl soothed, and often as though she were not —
and with ah what mysteries dripping — had lifted his god's head
summoning night to unending upheaval?
Neptune of the blood! Oh fearful trident!
Oh wreathéd horn and dark blast of his heart!
Hark ye, how the night is scooped hollow!
Does the lover's desire for her dear face, ye stars,
does it not come from you?
Is not his secret perception of her clear countenance
your secret, oh, pure constellations?

Alas, neither you nor his mother
could have so stretched the curve of his eyebrows
with longing. Nor was it for you, maiden, who felt him,
that the curve of his lips grew ripe.
Did you really believe your light
footfall had so shaken him?
You who pass like an early wind?
It is true you startled his heart;
but fears, far older, were roused by that startling.
Call him . . . yet no call of yours
will lure him all from his dark ambience.
He may want to come, yes . . . he tries to escape

sich in dein heimliches Herz und nimmt und beginnt sich.
Aber begann er sich je?
Mutter, du machtest ihn klein, du warsts, die ihn anfing;
dir war er neu, du beugtest über die neuen
Augen die freundliche Welt und wehrtest der fremden.
Wo, ach, hin sind die Jahre, da du ihm einfach
mit der schlanken Gestalt wallendes Chaos vertratst?
Vieles verbargst du ihm so; das nächtlich verdächtige Zimmer
machtest du harmlos, aus deineim Herzen voll Zuflucht
mischtest du menschlichern Raum seinem Nacht-Raum hinzu.
Nicht in die Finsternis, nein, in dein näheres Dasein
hast du das Nachtlicht gestellt, und es schien wie aus Freundschaft.
Nirgends ein Knistern, das du nicht lächelnd erklärtest,
so als wüsstest du längst, wann sich die Diele benimmt . . .
Und er horchte und linderte sich. So vieles vermochte
zärtlich dein Aufstehn; hinter den Schrank trat
hoch im Mantel sein Schicksal, und in die Falten des Vorhangs
passte, die leicht sich verschob, seine unruhige Zukunft.

Und er selbst, wie er lag, der Erleichterte, unter
schläfernden Lidern deiner leichten Gestaltung
Süsse lösend in den gekosteten Vorschlaf —:
schien ein Gehüteter . . . Aber innen: wer wehrete,
hinderte innen in ihm die Fluten der Herkunft?
Ach, da war keine Vorsicht im Schlafenden; schlafend,
aber träumend, aber in Fiebern: wie er sich einliess.

and accustoms himself with relief to your comforting heart
and begins himself over.
But did he ever begin?
You, his mother, by making him small, you began him.
To you he was a new thing, over his new eyes
you bent a friendly world
and averted all strangeness.
Where, alas, are the years when your slender presence
could stand between him and the seethings of chaos?
Much indeed did you hide!
The dark equivocal room
grew safe again when your heart's shelter wove
a human space into the empty night.
The night light you lit for him then
did not shine in the dark.
It shone in your still closer presence, in friendship.
And when the stair creaked you could always
explain it away with a smile as though you had known
when each board would be ready to spring . . .
And he listened — comforted.
Your gentle rising had so great a power
that Fate in his tall cape vanished into the closet,
while his restless future slipped behind
the soft-moving folds of the curtain.

As he lay there, comforted, and as the sweetness
of your presence was dissolved beneath his closing lids
in that first taste of sleep, he seemed guarded . . .
But what inward guard could there be?
Who could stem the flooding future?
In that sleeping one there was no watchfulness —
In sleep perhaps — but ah, in dreams, in fevers,

Er, der Neue, Scheuende, wie er verstrickt war,
mit des innern Geschehns weiterschlagenden Ranken
schon zu Mustern verschlungen, zu würgendem Wachstum,
zu tierhaft
jagenden Formen. Wie er sich hingab — . Liebte.
Liebte sein Inneres, seines Inneren Wildnis,
diesen Urwald in ihm, auf dessen stummem Gestürztsein
lichtgrün sein Herz stand. Liebte. Verliess es, ging die
eigenen Wurzeln hinaus in gewaltigen Ursprung,
wo seine kleine Geburt schon überlebt war. Liebend
stieg er hinab in das ältere Blut, in die Schluchten,
wo das Furchtbare lag, noch satt von den Vätern. Und jedes
Schreckliche kannte ihn, blinzelte, war wie verständigt.
Ja, das Entsetzliche lächelte . . . Selten
hast du so zärtlich gelächelt, Mutter. Wie sollte
er es nicht lieben, da es ihm lächelte. Vor dir
hat ers geliebt, denn, da du ihn trugst schon,
war es im Wasser gelöst, das den Keimenden leicht macht.
Siehe, wir lieben nicht, wie die Blumen, aus einem
einzigen Jahr; uns steigt, wo wir lieben,
unvordenklicher Saft in die Arme. O Mädchen,
dies: dass wir liebten in uns, nicht Eines, ein Künftiges,
sondern
das zahllos Brauende; nicht ein einzelnes Kind,
sondern die Väter, die wie Trümmer Gebirgs
uns im Grunde beruhn; sondern das trockene Flussbett

how he let himself go. Ah, how entangled already
this new shy thing had become
in the far-thrusting tendrils of his interior change!
These had already twisted themselves in a pattern,
in a writhing growth, into shadowy beasts of prey.
How he yielded himself! How he loved them!
Loved this secret world, this inner wilderness,
this primeval wood amid whose speechless ruin
his heart was a new green. Here lay his love.
And, though he turned away,
the growth of his own root continued still,
down those huge origins that had so long
outlived his tiny birth; lovingly down
into that older blood he went,
into those chasms where dreadful things lay
still glutted with forebears; and each horror
knew him and winked and made friends.
Yes, the frightful one smiled . . .
You, mother, did not often smile so fondly.
How could he not love it, since it smiled . . . ?
He had loved it before you.
It lay dissolved in your womb, in those waters
where the unborn child is made light. . . .
For see, we can not love out of a single year
as flowers do.
Love fills our arms with undirected sap.
What we love, oh maiden, in ourselves,
is no one thing,
and nothing that is still to come,
but an incalculable seething.
Not one child, but all those sires rather —
who lie engulfed in us like ruined hills —

einstiger Mütter — ; sondern die ganze
lautlose Landschaft unter dem wolkigen oder
reinen Verhängnis — : dies kam dir, Mädchen, zuvor.

Und du selber, was weisst du — , du locktest
Vorzeit empor in dem Liebenden. Welche Gefühle
wühlten herauf aus entwandelten Wesen. Welche
Frauen hassten dich da. Was für finstere Männer
regtest du auf im Geäder des Jünglings? Tote
Kinder wollten zu dir . . . O leise, leise,
tu ein liebes vor ihm, ein verlässliches Tagwerk, — führ ihn
nah an den Garten heran, gib ihm der Nächte
Übergewicht. . . .
Verhalt ihn. . . .

DIE NEUNTE ELEGIE

Warum, wenn es angeht, also die Frist des Daseins
hinzubringen, als Lorbeer, ein wenig dunkler als alles
andere Grün, mit kleinen Wellen an jedem
Blattrand (wie eines Windes Lächeln) — : warum dann
Menschliches müssen — und, Schicksal vermeidend,
sich sehnen nach Schicksal? . . .
O, nicht, weil Glück ist,
dieser voreilige Vorteil eines nahen Verlusts.
Nicht aus Neugier, oder zur Übung des Herzens,
das auch im Lorbeer wäre. . . .
Aber weil Hiersein viel ist, und weil uns scheinbar
alles das Hiesige braucht, dieses Schwindende, das
seltsam uns angeht. Uns, die Schwindendsten. Einmal

and those dry river beds of former mothers,
and all the soundless landscape of our fate
clouded or clear. This came to him
before you came, oh maiden.

And you, yourself, what can you know?
You enticed the past out of this boy.
What feelings then
streamed over you from beings long transformed?
What women's hate?
What sinister men were roused in the veins of your lover?
Dead children called for you . . . Oh gently,
gently, do a faithful loving task.
Lead him into the garden,
let him feel the ascendency of night . . .
restrain him. . . .

NINTH ELEGY OF DUINO

Why, since we are allowed to spend in laurel
this interval of being — laurel darker
than any other green, and curled a little
on each leaf's rim as by a smiling wind —
Why then this human task? — and why,
shunning our fate, do we still long for it?
Oh not for happiness' sake,
rash profit of approaching bankruptcy.
Nor for curiosity, nor to exercise the heart —
which might be laurel's function — but for this:
that being here means much and that all things,
these unenduring things that are so oddly
concerned with us, appear to need our help —
we most ephemeral.

jedes, nur einmal. Einmal und nicht mehr. Und wir auch
einmal. Nie wieder. Aber dieses
einmal gewesen zu sein, wenn auch nur einmal:
irdisch gewesen zu sein, scheint nicht widerrufbar.

Und so drängen wir uns und wollen es leisten,
wollens enthalten in unsern einfachen Händen,
im überfüllteren Blick und im sprachlosen Herzen.
Wollen es werden. Wem es geben? Am liebsten
alles behalten für immer . . . Ach, in den andern Bezug,
wehe, was nimmt man hinüber? Nicht das Anschaun, das hier
langsam erlernte, und kein hier Ereignetes. Keins.
Also die Schmerzen. Also vor allem das Schwersein,
also der Liebe lange Erfahrung, — also
lauter Unsägliches. Aber später,
unter den Sternen, was solls: die sind besser unsäglich.
Bringt doch der Wanderer auch vom Hange des Bergrands
nicht eine Hand voll Erde ins Tal, die allen unsägliche, sondern
ein erworbenes Wort, reines, den gelben und blaun
Enzian. Sind wir vielleicht hier, um zu sagen: Haus,
Brücke, Brunnen, Tor, Krug, Obstbaum, Fenster, —
höchstens: Säule, Turm . . . aber zu sagen, verstehs,
o zu sagen so, wie selber die Dinge niemals
innig meinten zu sein. Ist nicht die heimliche List
dieser verschwiegenen Erde, wenn sie die Liebenden drängt,
dass sich in ihrem Gefühl jedes und jedes entzückt?
Schwelle: was ists für zwei

Each thing once and once only;
and we too once and no more.
But to have been, even if only once,
to have been earthly, seems irrevocable.

Thus are we driven towards accomplishment;
driven to hold this thing in our plain hands,
in our crowded gaze and speechless hearts —
we want to become this thing.
But afterwards to whom shall it be given?
Better, alas, to keep it all forever . . .
yet woe is me!
What can we carry to that other state?
Not contemplation, here so slowly learned.
Nothing that happens to us here — nothing . . .
We'll take away our pains then, and our grief —
yes, first of all our sorrows, and this long
experiencing of love and many nameless things.
But later among the stars what could these be?
They were best unnamed.
He who has climbed high mountains does not bring
a clod of speechless earth back to the valley.
He brings a clear new word, the blue and yellow gentian.
May it not be that we are here to say:
house, stream, bridge, fruit-tree, pitcher,
doorway, window, or at the most
tower and column?
But to say it, ah, understand me,
as these things could have no thought of being.
Is it not our silent planet's craft
to so drive lovers until one and all
are rapt into her mood?

Liebende, dass sie die eigne ältere Schwelle der Tür
ein wenig verbrauchen, auch sie, nach den vielen vorher
und vor den künftigen . . . , leicht.
Hier ist des Säglichen Zeit, hier seine Heimat.
Sprich und bekenn. Mehr als je
fallen die Dinge dahin, die erlebbaren, denn,
was sie verdrängend ersetzt, ist ein Tun ohne Bild.
Tun unter Krusten, die willig zerspringen, sobald
innen das Handeln entwächst und sich anders begrenzt.
Zwischen den Hämmern besteht
unser Herz, wie die Zunge
zwischen den Zähnen, die doch,
dennoch die preisende bleibt.

Preise dem Engel die Welt, nicht die unsägliche, ihm
kannst du nicht grosstun mit herrlich Erfühltem; im Weltall,
wo er fühlender fühlt, bist du ein Neuling, drum zeig
ihm das Einfache, das, von Geschlecht zu Geschlechtern
gestaltet,
als ein Unsriges lebt neben der Hand und im Blick.
Sag ihm die Dinge. Er wird staunender stehn; wie du standest
bei dem Seiler in Rom, oder beim Töpfer am Nil.
Zeig ihm, wie glücklich ein Ding sein kann, wie schuldlos
und unser,
wie selbst das klagende Leid rein zur Gestalt sich entschliesst
dient als ein Ding, oder stirbt in ein Ding — , und jenseits

A doorsill: what if two lovers wear away a little
the far older sill of their own dwelling:
what if they too, after so many before them
and so many that are still to come,
wear down a little?
Here is articulate time, here the land
of what can be spoken. See thou proclaim it.
Now more than ever all that sense perceives
must fall away, because our acts are shapeless —
actions whose shell falls easily apart
when the interior pressure of the aim,
outgrowing it, takes on another form.
Between hammerings our heart
endures, as among teeth our tongue
which remains still the giver of praise.

Sing of earth to the angel; not ineffable earth.
To him can you boast of no rapture.
You are but lately arrived
in a world where he feels so much more.
Show him rather the simple man-made things
that race after race have fashioned, and that live
still, in our sight and near to our hands.
Tell him of things. He will stand beside you and wonder;
as you once stood in Rome by the maker of rope,
or by the potter in Egypt.
Show him how happy a thing can be, how blameless, how
much ours.
How even moaning sorrow can take shape
to serve us in a thing and die there,
or blessedly transformed
escapes from violins.

selig der Geige entgeht. Und diese, von Hingang
lebenden Dinge verstehn, dass du sie rühmst; vergänglich,
traun sie ein Rettendes uns, den Vergänglichsten, zu.
Wollen, wir sollen sie ganz im unsichtbarn Herzen verwandeln
in — o unenlich — in uns! wer wir am Ende auch seien.

Erde, ist es nicht dies, was du willst: unsichtbar
in uns erstehn? — Ist es dein Traum nicht,
einmal unsichtbar zu sein? — Erde! unsichtbar!
Was, wenn Verwandlung nicht, ist dein drängender Auftrag?
Erde, du liebe, ich will. O glaub, es bedürfte
nicht deiner Frühlinge mehr, mich dir zu gewinnen, einer,
ach, ein einziger ist schon dem Blute zu viel.
Namenlos bin ich zu dir entschlossen, von weit her.
Immer warst du im Recht, und dein heiliger Einfall
ist der vertrauliche Tod.
Siehe, ich lebe. Woraus? Weder Kindheit noch Zukunft
werden weniger. . . . Überzähliges Dasein
entspringt mir im Herzen.

Rainer Maria Rilke

These that live by passing
understand your praise.
They trust us in their passing, thus to save them —
we, most transitory. They desire
to be transformed into our unseen hearts
and made — oh, without end — a part of us —
whoever we may finally be.

Earth, is not this your wish: to rise again
invisible in us? Is not your dream to be
some day invisible? An Earth invisible!
What else this hard pressed mandate
but to effect this change?
Oh Earth, dear Earth! I will; nor do I need
another of your Aprils to persuade me
since one alone is more than blood can stand.
I still unnamed belonged to you, long since.
You have been always right and kindly death
is your own holy fancy.
See, I am living. Out of what?
Neither childhood nor future grow less . . .
Incalculable being gushes from my heart.

HESTER PICKMAN

COW

THE first summer I worked for Dan Smith we got stuck in the middle of our haying because two of the hired men went off on a drunk and remembered in that happy state not to come back.

Gnat, the shrivelled little foreman, seemed glad at first, but the boss looked more worried than ever. And his fat wife said, "Drunken bums like that hates hard work like poison. We got to git some strong farm boys now."

Gnat ogled her and whined, "Me and Mose kin finish all the haying."

She snorted when he mentioned me.

The boss picked at the broken horn of his nose and scribbled a letter to the agency in New York.

A couple of days later as the foreman and I were clearing a meadow along the road, we heard the old worm fence creaking behind us. Up rolled a tremendous Jew with a battered suitcase and stuck a slab of a hand under our noses.

"So you're the feller from the agency?" Gnat cracked a sour smile at the card. "We'll be gitting back soon and you kin hop up and ride along."

"O. K., Captain."

While he lumbered back to drop his suitcase near the fence, Gnat whined, "Nothing more'n a cow. He won't last long."

The big Jew heaved up to us and pointed to a fork. "Boys, I'll start now." He must have heard Gnat, for he grinned. "My nickname's Cow. What's yours?"

I threw him a fork, and he went at the hay in his shirt sleeves and city clothes. He grinned when we roared at his antics.

He held his pitchfork as if there were a poison adder in front of him, and when he did get it into the hay, he tried to lift the whole earth with it like a cock of hay. The sweat streamed down his face, but he stopped for a moment only to watch how we handled our forks, and then he went on again digging up sod.

When the wagon was loaded, he refused to climb up. "It's good discipline to walk when you don't want to." He lumbered behind the wagon, chewing on a spear of grass.

When he saw the boss, he burst out laughing, "My name's Cow." The boss seemed satisfied at the first shot and ordered that the other bed be made in the room where I slept.

Disappointed that no handsome stripling stood before her, the fat missus grumbled that he could make the bed himself if he was in that hurry. But when she heard the new man's hearty laugh and felt his eyes on her, she shuffled upstairs.

Cow showed up in some faded khaki for evening chores. Clumsy at first with the cows, he showed infinite patience fiddling with their teats. He'd get up with a sort of bow and pat a kicking heifer. As it was flytime and unbearably hot, the rest of us clubbed the brutes until their muzzles ran red snot. "That ain't discipline being so nervous with your dumb sisters," he boomed across the barn at us.

Smelling of milk, he sat beside the boss's two kids at supper and patted them. "I got to get a pair, too."

"So you're married, Cow, and run away from your wife." Gnat winked at the fat missus.

Cow laughed. "Young feller, it takes more than you to get my goat. I had a grandfather in Russia, who used to call my grandma Cow, too, but hell! she was sharp as the old knives she'd sharpen on the edge of her pots. Afraid of nothing and always on the go. I come out here to be like a cow and get rid of some itches that ain't good for discipline and study farm conditions. I'm a carpenter by trade, but it's slack now. And anyway there can't be much of a revolution without the farmer horning in."

He guffawed to see the expressions on our faces.

The first night he was with us we had the regular bottling to do in the milk shed. Dead-tired, we crept down the red clay road, stable lamps swinging, while he rolled behind whistling. Gnat seemed more peevish than ever probably because the missus had looked at the big fellow two or three times across the table. As Cow leaned against the shed and admired the sky pulsing with stars, he said something about most Jews being heavy blabbers and light workers.

Cow just smiled and picked up an old bottle. He grunted a little and the bottle cracked in his hand, and then, as he shouted a shout that rolled over the hills, he shivered the bottle in his awful paw. "Only a little trick, Captain."

Gnat seemed to shrivel up more and didn't give another peep in the milk shed.

The boss sighed, "You're a pretty good man. Jesus, I was hefty myself once but never like that . . . a goddamn bull trampling a feller don't do him much good. . . ."

"So farming ain't a joke," Cow said, dusting his hands.

"It's a hell of a one. I got ruptured monkeying with a stuck wagon and then the lousy bull." He crept out into the night. "See you git everything to rights."

When the three of us were done, we waded through the wet grass up to the farmhouse.

Gnat tried to get friendly. He sniggered, "After the boss, he found he weren't going to be good for much, he crawls downstairs and gits his rifle. He used to be a feller with a terrible temper, but now he ain't got the guts of chawed sparrow grass. He begins peppering that there bull from his bedroom. He carried it on slow till the bull stood on his head and then was astraddle the fence and over in the road. Then he shoots him right through the ear fine's silk."

Cow looked at me and said nothing.

Up in our hot bedroom he undressed and stood naked, his chest slashed in places and tattooed with a splendid woman with a hammer in one hand and a sickle in the other. He said something about her being without either and without clothes, but for the sake of somebody who liked him, as he had been unable to get her off, he had had all added. Grinning, he began writing a letter on some old-fashioned paper with a mark like a sealed fountain in the corner. As he wrote he fired questions at me, and I explained I was working on the farm to get some material for some farm stories.

He grunted and little by little threw some of the clothes off his life.

When he was five, his family came to America and settled in Passaic where his father managed to make some money in the handkerchief business. He went to the public schools for about ten years and then, after he became too big to keep away from the shopgirls and took to reading Jack London, he ran away to sea. He'd been everything but a farmer. During the war he worked in South America in a quartz mine where he lost all his hair inside of a few weeks because of the heat and sweat. He spent almost one year tramping the Andes backbone, and there were days when he was without water and had to soften his grub with his own urine. Back in the states he joined a circus as strong man, finally drifting east. Here he got married last year, still had fits of restlessness; every other day suffering hell to remember himself playing with holystones like dice on the decks of rat-infested tubs.

"Lousy system that makes a feller with guts something like an outcast. I'm a carpenter by trade and I won't quit till I help make a coffin for it." He laughed and finished his letter.

As he tried to put his part of the room into shipshape, he rumbled, "Now supposing you bowl over some pin-head publisher and get your stuff popular and get rich, won't everything be hell yet for most everybody in the same rotten system? You writers only worrying about yourselves and sticking out all your nice parts like a whore before a looking glass or a customer. Even London was like the rest sometimes. Have you read this?"

He chucked "The Iron Heel" at me and then jumped into bed, where he began reading a pamphlet. I soon fell asleep and when I woke after midnight he was still up, examining with care a little buffalo-chested moth he had caught.

I thought I'd have a hell of a job getting him up at about four o'clock for milking. He was up, however, even before the hollow-eyed boss and sniffling Gnat.

He began to get the hang of milking, and the swollen bags seemed no more than toys in his immense paws. During meals he ate more than all of us put together and between them outworked us all. The knack of pitching came to him the second day, and he had the sore Gnat buried underneath his cocks of hay more than once in the meadow next the farmhouse, to the great amusement of the fat missus.

He radiated so much energy that even the ailing boss took on another hay wagon, and in about two weeks we were far ahead of our haying schedule. Then we turned to weeding the truck on our fours, and Cow took to it like a duck to water, his shirt bellying out in the terrific heat like an immense bladder full of quarts of sweat.

Though we were on our feet from four every morning until about nine at night, he would wash his clothes before going to bed (of the hired men only Gnat had his washed) and then walk two miles to the post office to mail his letters. Back from his hike he would gab until past midnight with anyone he could keep from hitting the hay. And in spite of such prodigious tirelessness, he sighed to me once, "Nothing helps much. Now I'll roll around in bed, the flesh like a jibboom."

Whenever he could he dragged me Sundays to town, where he got into baseball games with some of the farm boys behind the feed store or horseplayed with them and told them about señoritas sweet and bitter as Canton ginger. After such stories he'd invariably grow sarcastic about their being so dumb about a system that worked them like oxen and had some of them hopping as though they were having shotguns of rock salt spraying their hindquarters. One morning as we passed the church, he burst into gargantuan laughter and pulled me in after him. After the sermon, he talked to the minister and left him startled with, "My dear feller, you need a buglight working in such darkness." Out in the road he said, "You got to give that Jesus Christ credit. He didn't give a pinch of guano for his family or the women and just sailed without tacking for his idea with good discipline. Ever read that French feller Barbusse?"

The fat missus thought he was showing some interest in her because he washed and dried dishes for her a couple of times, and once, when she wasn't well, even kneaded dough and baked a half dozen loaves. But he explained to me that he was making a thorough study of farm conditions and added that it was good discipline for a man of his type to hang around such a splendid field of flesh.

One hot morning after the boss had driven the milk truck to the dairy, Cow and I went up to the orchard for some spicy apples which he could eat by the peck. We heard some whispering in the fencerow of the lot adjoining the orchard. We sneaked up. There lay the fat woman all spread out like a field with her two cocks of breasts and Gnat fussing around her.

Cow tightened up and stared at me.

"That's an old story," I whispered.

"And he — he lets her get away with it?"

"Can't help himself. The farm's hers. There's his condition."

"Leading a lie of a life. Hell! and they call me a cow. Why, they're the ones being jumped — all of them and you, too."

In the barn during evening chores when Gnat shrilled his favorite song about his wanting to be like boar hogs because of their tirelessness to please sows, Cow burst into a roar of bitter laughter. "Every little bug worried about its own appetite and the whole world go hang — no trying to wrestle it down even for a good cause." He spat into the drop and yanked so hard at her teats that the heifer kicked. He got up and knocked her down with a blow of his fist.

At the supper table he couldn't sit still for a moment, but pitched in with his first bite about the working conditions on farms and how everybody didn't worry a goddamn so long as he filled his bellies and women.

The boss turned brick-red. "If you don't like it, you kin go back to Russia you're always batting so much about."

Cow only let out his rumbling laugh while the fat woman smiled at him as though she were drunk.

A couple of days later as I was sharpening some mowing machine knives in the tool house, I heard the boss and him yelling at each other as they were slopping the pigs.

"You got to have guts. She ain't bad looking and you can't blame her much. You don't even know if those kids are yours. Chuck the lie of a life you're leading and — "

There was the sound of a smack.

I looked out and saw the boss held up in those big paws like a trussed capon.

"But you're living a lie — a goddamn lie, fool you."

The boss flapped his hands helplessly and began sobbing like a kid. "What the hell diff-diffrince makes to you?"

Cow dropped him in a heap in a pig's wallow. "I'm stronger and I'm responsible for you. You're living a lie and making things rottener, little stinkbug, you."

His thumb hung down like a teat. He tugged at it and it snapped back into place while the sweat beaded up all over him and stood in wreaths on his bald head.

The boss sat in the wallow and just simply cried not only from sheer humiliation but also, probably, from remembering his helplessness and the long barren field of life still before him. After a while he got up and blinked around, but nobody was in sight.

I thought that after this scrap, Cow would be surely fired. Nothing came of it. And still, hammer and tongs, he went at the three of us. The missus, her skirts yanked up to her knees, listened with her oxlike eyes on him. The jealous Gnat tried to show his sting several times.

"They're slackers — always talking about the rich that worked for it."

The boss said huskily, "Some wants to, and they can't."

"You got the ticket now," Cow cried.

A sick grin tugged at the boss's face, the first I had seen in a long time. He spoke out and didn't mind his wife. "It ain't every day they kills a bull and throws the ballocks to the poor. Don't that show something's out of gear? Who gits the ballocks all the time?" He couldn't keep his face from creasing and stumped out into the night.

When we were up in our room, Cow smacked the slabs of his hands together. "He'll wake up yet."

I said, "You'd better hold your horses or something'll happen around here. You're so fanatic about — "

He laughed and sat down to write another letter on the paper with the mark like a sealed fountain. "My dear feller, when a man's right, he's always what you call fanatic."

"But life's too complicated to butt into other people's affairs. One should be an indifferentist like Chekhov and at the same time liberal and open and — "

"Open like a whore. Chuck your Chekhov into a cow drop. A feller's got responsibilities. Read this." He fired a pamphlet at me and went downstairs to get a drink.

He came up laughing. "Sh, sh . . . She ambushed me in the kitchen and said she'd do my washing for me. And I shouldn't be worried about the boss, he couldn't fire me no matter what I did."

He was a little restless, however, and went to bed instead of finishing his letter. He kept sighing, "Nothing helps much. I wonder how poor redhead looks away from me so long."

The next few days he worked around with less pep and was glad to get away to build a chicken coop for the leghorn pullets. Gnat and I finished up the last of the hay that season, some redtop in the poorest meadow, by the time he was through with his carpentering.

Our next big job was to cut the oats which we were going to use for hay. We got it down and then began filling the barn near the farmhouse with it. Gnat stayed on the wagon unloading, while I drove the team which pulled the grapnel fork full of oats up to the rail on the rooftree and then dumped it in the mow when the trip rope was jerked. Cow was up in the mow and did the work of at least two good men.

The first day we carted the oats, his spirits seemed to have jumped over the moon. He told me that the boss had taken one of his pamphlets and had spent one of his sleepless nights trying to dope it out. Also the night before when he had come back from his hike to town, he had found the missus puttering around the kitchen in her nightgown.

"My discipline was O. K. I just patted her on her moon and sent her back to bed." Then he looked at me. "Do you believe me?"

"Sure I do."

He shrugged his shoulders and climbed up to the mow where Gnat, who was getting more jealous of him day by day, tried to swamp him under huge dumps of oats. It couldn't be done so easily to a man who could handle two full milk cans as though they were Indian clubs. Cow began to tease him by pulling the horses back on their haunches by tugging on the rope.

Gnat started snarling at him until even the boss, who sat among the pecking chickens in the barnyard watching us, asked him in a wheedling tone to stop.

"Like hell I will. Who the hell are you?"

The boss turned red and looked down at his hands.

Cow yelled, "You little bug, shut up or I'll come down and squash you." Then, stripped to the waist, his back to the wagon, he went on with his work up in the mow.

One had to be careful how one handled the trip rope, and now Gnat, mad as the devil, jerked it so the grapnel fork slipped from its car and shot like a huge spider down on the broad back. Light as a cocksparrow on his feet when he had to be, Cow jumped and flew from under it. One of its teeth struck him and bowled him over. Gnat hurled his pitchfork into the hay on the barn floor and backed his horses until they crashed into the silo in the yard. He swung his fist and shrilled, "I seen you in the kitchen with her, I seen you last night."

With a bellow Cow picked himself up and jumped from the mow — a distance of about thirty feet. The barn floor was packed with hay; he had dived down a number of times. I expected him to bound up like a rubber ball and get Gnat with one bounce and knock hell out of him.

Something awful, however, seemed to happen. When the dust cleared, he was astraddle the pitchfork Gnat had hurled handle up into the hay. It must have gone quite a distance into him, for as he crashed to the floor he jerked his hands and feet like one of those wooden toy men with strings pulled in back.

How we managed to get that limp bulk to the bedroom is still a miracle to me. Each of us was bathed in blood. The boss, almost out of his mind, called up the veterinary first. Gnat kept on snivelling, "Lousy fork."

When the doctor came, that awful tail of wood had to be pulled out. Neither the boss nor I could stand it, and we left the room. Gnat helped and showed he had guts, and so did the missus after she had quietened the scared kids.

"It was long's a bull's rod," Gnat told us later. "And that feller wouldn't take nothing but yell 'Pull,' and then he went off."

He was the nurse that night and helped the doctor, who stayed on and gave Cow needles. The boss and I sat under a sky with a moon like a broken thumbnail and shivered. Just before milking at dawn I plucked up enough courage and climbed the spotted stairs.

He was lying still and at last opened chewed lips. "No discipline," he mumbled, "I'm a bug, too . . ." His face twisted as he whispered something about poor redhead, and then his muscles knotted and a great red bubble broke from his mouth.

I blundered downstairs.

Towards evening he died.

We went through his papers with the marks like sealed fountains and found his city address. In answer to our telegram the phone rang that midnight and the missus blurted out the whole story. Next morning with the first train, there appeared a tall pregnant woman, head red and cut so close that it resembled a daisy that had lost its petals; with her was an old Jew with a beard like a nose bag who kept oying continually after the first glimpse at the corpse.

They stayed up in his room all day without eating a bite while the body was in the hands of the undertaker. The wife wept only once and that was at night when we overheard her father say, "I told you not to let him go, him with strange ideas and no feelings to be a family man."

Next morning the feedman, who was also the undertaker, came in his big car, loaded on the tremendous coffin and the two mourners, and lumbered towards the city.

The whole nasty business seemed to take the starch out of us. We didn't do anything but our chores that whole day. After supper the missus and Gnat stole away into the warm evening to solace themselves.

The boss, who was trying to play with the kids on the awn, quivered. "Now they ain't even hiding about it."

I walked over to him wearily. "Dan, I'm leaving tomorrow."

He jerked back in a scared fashion. "Going!"

"No use, I've got to go."

"You been here so long and winter we give you some time for that there writing of yourn." He blinked down at his hands. "You're part of the family."

Always suspicious of me, Gnat was glad to see me go, and the missus scratched herself and said, "We'll git from now on only real farmboys."

The boss drove me over to the station next morning with the milk. I lugged along an old suitcase, my Chekhov to read on the train, and a heavy heart. It was raining and the red clay roads and the wet grass looked as though a huge cow had been disembowelled and bled over the broad countryside.

At the station we shook hands, and he held on for a moment. "I'm sorry, Dan, but something's got a hellhold on me. I feel I need guts and I owed somebody more than money. I got to get back to the city."

We looked at each other and he probably like me saw again our fellow worker of the summer, who had come in our midst like a bomb and, bursting himself, planted his fragments in some of us, perhaps, forever.

He let go and made two fists that looked like ballocks. "I — I feel like I owe somebody something, something like a shotgun." His face broke. He ran to the truck and it bucked down the road.

I climbed into the train and tried to read some Chekhov, but I felt too miserable. I imagined hearing strange sounds. I took out my pipe and went into the smoker where I sat among mill workers on their way to the mills.

MOE BRAGIN

TWO POEMS

I

so standing, our eyes filled with wind, and the
whining rigging over us, i implore you to
notice how the keen ship lifts (skilfully
like some bird which is all birds but more fleet)
herself against the air — and whose do you
suppose possibly are certain hands, terse
and invisible, with large first new stars
knitting the structure of distinct sunset

driving white spikes of silence into joists
hewn from hugest colour
                                        (and which night hoists
miraculously above the always
beyond such wheres and fears or any when
unwondering immense directionless
horizon)
          — do you perhaps know these workmen?

II

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclose me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

E. E. Cummings

CORRESPONDENCE

COSTA PIU DELLA DIVINA COMMEDIA

To The Editor:

I

In reply to your earlier letter.* Your statement about live types etc. amounts to saying that there is good low life in America. There is good low life anywhere. The lower it is the less it is national and the less it reflects any credit or interest on the *particular* place in which it exists.

I can only repeat my malediction: God eternally damblast a country that spends billions interfering with people's diet and that can not support a single printing press which will print stuff that people like me want to read; i.e., regardless of immediate fiscal profit.

The endowments are sabotaged. Even when some vague and good-natured millionaire "founds" something with allegedly cultural or creative intent, the endowment is handed over to academic eminences who are as incapable of picking a first class painter or writer as I shd. be of making a sound report on a copper mine. The one thing they are sure to hate is the germ of original capacity. They will go on backing the Howells, the Tarkingtons and the W. Churchills to the end of their ignominious history.

My heading was found in the local pharmacy. I asked for a certain brand of excellent American toilet paper and the pharmacien replied with this epitaph on Anglo Saxon civilization.: "E essagerate. Costa piu della Divina Commedia." Yes he wd. sell it to me, but really it cost too much. It cost more than the Divina Commedia.

Our race still maintains this proportion in estimate. It is the reversal of the old epigram about hyacinths.

---

* The editor suggested that Mr. Pound return to this country. He offered as bait such phenomena as gangsters as interesting parallels to the Malatesta of the Cantos.

2

re/ style in America. *YES*. and it is worth irritating people and sticking to that somewhat Toryish (tho' not fundamentally Tory) position however unpopular.

BUT it is dangerous internally and ex —

danger of Concord school omitting to notice Whitman.

Historically, people in rough environment, if they have any sensibility or perceptions want "culture an' refinement"

Whitman embodying nearly everything one disliked etc.

failure to see the wood for the trees.

///

Secondly or thirdly

Danger of confusing your (for example) lyric impulse and yr/ editorial function.

As lyricist you can WANT (and shd/ want) whatever you damn please.

Editorial function something very different.

In that function one has to (at least) observe, admit the capacities of people who like what one does *NOT* like.

Life wd. have been (in my case) much less interesting if I had waited till Joyce, Lewis, Eliot, D/H/Lawrence etc. complied with what my taste was in 1908.

///

Oh HELL, how shall I put it. My son, elucidate thine own bloody damn point of view, by its contrast to others, not by trying to make the others conform.

All right/ you want a STYLE out of America. Stick at it.
BUT when it comes it mayn't be where you are lookin' fer it.
As editor all you can do is to get the best of what is done
A. from those you more or less agree with.
B. from those you DONT.
and in latter case you can editorially profess to be conscious of an energy, which you believe to be wrongly directed.

EZRA POUND

DANCE CHRONICLE

KREUTZBERG: WIGMAN: PAS D'ACIER: THE FUTURE

There is actually in this country a potential audience for dancers, a fact of the most obvious, initial and overwhelming importance. People in America like to look at dancing. But whether or not there exists an audience for a permanent ballet is another question. The Germans, — Kreutzberg, Georgi and Wigman, numerous American soloists with their supporting "groups"; — Graham, Strawbridge, Findlay, etc., can more than fill a fair-sized Broadway theatre on many Sunday evenings. They even mass together and play for a week, or the mime, Angna Enters, can give eight consecutive performances at least once a season in New York City, aside from the rest of her provincial tours and not count it money lost. Then there is Argentina and the Denishawn dancers. It may be salutary to take stock of the present quality and condition of the exhibitions with which these dancers satisfy themselves. For at the present day, in the United States of America, though there is considerable energy in both audience and performer there can hardly be said to exist a single demonstration which could seriously occupy for one performance a continental balletomane. That is, an intelligent Frenchman, for example, who had known Pavlowa, Nijinsky, Karsavina, the later Diaghilev group, or the ballets at even provincial opera houses from Copenhagen to Turin. The continental in New York, to be sure, would probably amuse himself at the Palace for good tap-dancing or at the Savoy in Harlem for the Rumba or the Lindy Hop. But this Chronicle is occupied with the so-called "conscious" or "artistic" dancers, not "folk-dancing."

Though the Diaghilev ballet could have provided us with some sort of critical standards if our memories had been good, many of us today were too young to have seen their last visit in 1917, and a comparative few only, had the good fortune to see them abroad. Pavlowa's successive farewells gave but the special fragrance of her own unique perfection. She was somehow never able to be sure of her preëminence and sacrificed a synthesis by employing second- or third-rate partners and corps de ballet to project herself all the further to the front. Isadora Duncan's memory is not brightened by the loose legacy either of her disciples, or her too easily inherited discipline. And though Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn mean the American Ballet to too many Americans, one is ungrateful to forget their historical priority, if one can little respect their taste and lack of selection. Their main value is in an accurate approximation of international folk dances. Then whom have we seen to give us a taste of what dancing can do, can be?

II

Harald Kreutzberg, with his partner Yvonne Georgi, has worked up a considerable enthusiasm by their duet appearances all over this country. By continental standards, where a dancer's technique is as presupposed as craftsmanship to a carpenter, Kreutzberg is a very negligible phenomenon, and his partner has the slight grace of comparative competence. Kreutzberg is a sketchy technician on any basis of classical dancing. He has a few favorite gestures which are effective in themselves but which he irrelevantly employs in his every creation, no matter what the intention of the design. He just likes to look effective. Dancing has as many hells as any other art, only the exhibitionism manifested by a direct bodily façade is more immediately apparent, perhaps, and no less painful than in "True Confessions." In fact Kreutzberg is no dancer at all. He is a mime. He mimes a subject matter of German post-expressionism; madness, infantilism, the nonsense of an insane pierrot; a tiresome romanticism of the reiterated unusual. He makes little noises, he stamps his feet, he grimaces, he comes in with a tulip bound (by a baby blue ribbon) round his shaved pate, and throws off the overtones of a eunuch's petulant humor which is as grotesque as the failures of a female impersonator. Only when he can afford to be dignified as in his Persian dance can he justify himself as an artist to any but the most gullible and personally voracious public.

III

Mary Wigman has been demonstrated as the triumph of mind over matter. In her case it is an easy and irrelevant triumph. Nevertheless, since Isadora Duncan there has been no one in New York who has whipped up dance followers into such a righteous cream of frenzy. We have been told that "this is not a woman but a priestess, dancing." Only Stark Young in the *New Republic* and Frank Sullivan in the *New Yorker* held out against the universal determination of an almost angry approval. But Mary Wigman is a destructive dancer and her influence is dangerous. In her own case, for as yet we have not seen a whole ballet of her training, she has completely disintegrated the continuous flow of pose and gesture into a series of static or abruptly shifting positions. She is at a complete loss, for instance, when she attempts to negotiate a turn. She chooses to "interpret" only the most cosmic of "ideas," which is convenient since it irons out any exact meaning into a flat generalization of the ambiguous, subjective and equivocal. Bliss, ecstasy, release, revolt, terror, enchantment lead finally, pursued to their inevitable climax, to what but exhaustion? And so Mary Wigman finishes almost every dance by falling in a collapsed heap on the floor. But it is not the exhaustion of the body; she can do astonishing things with her body. She can raise herself from the floor as if by her navel and elevate her belly so that she appears to have, like the Diana of Ephesus, double pairs of breasts. She can whirl around in a dance called "Monotony" with nearly the equilibrium of physical control that is the common property of any good vaudeville artist. No, it is not the exhaustion of the body; it is the complete and pitiful exhaustion of the imagination. It is the poverty in the spirit of a woman who determines that in spite of a lack of physical grace, in spite of recognized traditional systems (unexplored, but tacitly agreed to be defunct) she will be, a Dancer. She might equally well have been an amateur tennis champion or a lay-psychoanalyst. There is no impulse to dance, to understand the restrictions and limitations of the body, to control the body as a medium of expression, — rather than of self-expression.* Mary

---

* "Standing in the center of the space, eyes closed, the danseuse feels the weight of the atmosphere resting upon her limbs. Hesitatingly she lifts her arm, cleaving the invisible body of space, pressing forward, the feet following — thus creating the direction. Space appears to be reaching for her, pulling back from the newly created road; counter direction — a game, up and down, forward and back, a meeting of one's self, a struggle in space for space — the Dance. Quietly tender, and ragingly wild:" Signed statement of Wigman quoted in the May *Dance Magazine*.

Wigman is damned by the sin of pride. Her popularity is dependent upon the admiration of similar unfortunates who identify their aims at self-expression with her complete self-exposal; hence the bitterness of their acclaim.

But they are comparatively harmless; they have not indulged in the tour-de-force of the creation of a "new" system of physical action. Wigman herself is dangerous because by the strength of her personal appeal she can seduce such passivity into mistaken dancing. She believes and teaches that anyone can dance. It requires no particular dedication; it is an idiom which she can provide. In a similar manner anyone can indulge in the therapeutic writing of "poetry," anyone can paint "pictures"; only in a lesser degree compose "music," or build "architecture." In these last cases, fortunately, the technique is more patently explicit.

IV

Then there is the so-called American dancing, depending on ideas from various heterodox schools of continental choreography, never used in the purity of their oblique invention but always with the little personal modifications of innumerable petit-maîtres. It would be too cruel and too easy to enumerate the various recitalists of the past New York season. But one cannot let the performance of Prokofiev's "Pas d'Acier" pass by without a word. It is the archtype of "artistic" American dancing. From its example can be drawn many valuable references as to the present state and future possibilities of ballet in this country.

The League of Composers and the Philadelphia Orchestra Association under the unique control of a very able musician, Mr. Leopold Stokowski, are responsible for the "Pas d'Acier," or Beat of Steel, an industrial ballet by Serge Prokofiev originally created for the Diaghilev repertory, with choreography by Leonide Massine. Mr. Stokowski has in his hands an enormous amount of power. More than any other person he can affect the fortunes of ballet in America. With a wonderful orchestra trained by his hand, generous patronage both from financial and intellectual angles, — what designer or musician could afford to refuse any aid he could care to command? Last year Massine arranged Strawinsky's Rites of Spring as the first danced performance in this country, and it was better than one had dared to hope, which, when all was considered, was not much. The year before came Strawinsky's "Noces" in a Chauve Souris performance which at least had the virtues of consistency. Even this year in the Oedipus Rex, with Robert Edmond Jones' superb dolls, Stokowski conducted a distinguished performance of the first rank. In each of these ballets and their subsidiary events one felt the single hand of a directing conductor. That is, there was an idea, which, right or wrong, was advanced and arrived at some sort of conclusion.

The "Pas d'Acier," with an almost unforgivable generosity, was put in the hands of a scenery designer, Lee Simonson, who has on occasion done effective work for the New York Theatre Guild. Not only was he to design the scenery and costumes, but also he was to rewrite the scenario of the action and largely influence the pattern of the choreography.

A stage designer is a valuable subsidiary to a theatrical adventure. If he is a Gordon Craig he may even be a scholar, a philosopher and an actor. He is rarely a dramatist or a dancer. The man who writes a scenario for a ballet should have the rudimentary knowledge of the ways in which bodies in combination can be moved most effectively to create a formal dance. In the first place the Simonson scenery was weak Meyerhold; ineffective and impractical. The libretto was infantile in the extreme and entirely literary in attitude; literal, pointless — confused.

Pas d'Acier is a satiric dance commentary on the rhythm of machine industry and its efficiency, visualized in an American environment. Human laborers, driven by foremen, go through weary motions on an upper level, first primitive slave work, finally machine routine. Two efficiency experts try to stir these beings to faster movement. . . . Below, a belt, symbolizing natural forces as yet unliberated, heaves, unformed. . . . Three carefree peasant figures enter; then the bourgeoisie — pompous preachers, professors, flappers, etc., who join the bucolic figures and dance about them. Suddenly the three central figures of the symbolic belt — Coal, Iron and Steel — plunge into their midst and throw them into confusion. The efficiency experts, unable to control the scene, strangle the peasants. Finally the human belt, animated to a point of frenzy, rush down in revolt. But their attempt to throttle the bourgeoisie is subdued by soldiers with tear bombs and gas masks. They return to their belt, to its monotonous routine, only now at a faster tempo. Everything is again in place; the experts dance in triumph.

On a top level a symbolic belt of men were whipped by Assyrian slave-drivers denoting the age-old procession of labor from the Pharaohs to the U. S. S. R. Below, a human belt of machine-deadened beings nervously gyrated. On the back drop there swung the shadow of sickle and hammer, inverted and out of time.

Although it is almost necessary for the librettist of a ballet to have a working idea of the technique of dancing, it is indispensable that the actual choreographer be a dancer. Whatever else Edwin Strawbridge may be, he surely cannot be called a dancer. A dancer has an orderly imagination in relation to shifting groups of human beings. A dancer would never have tolerated the appalling confusion of monotonous calisthenics that distinguished the human and symbolic belts. A dancer would have insisted on an attempt at precision, at a close attack. The worst of it was — there was not even a perfunctory demonstration as the curtain ran down. Scattered applause and sheepish silence. Well, thought the audience, this must be the "modern" dancing — we've heard so much about. Yet if there had been only a few healthy hisses, so many dance enthusiasts would have considered it a philistine gesture against "new art forms."

V

"Pas d'Acier" is past. No use in killing a corpse. Although if one is willing to be polite and undemonstrative it is more than likely that the League of Composers will be forced into a similar disaster next year. The League is a convenient and powerful organization. They deserve and need take only the best.

Would it be impertinent to suggest to those at the head of such organizations as the League of Composers that there is no particular excellence in experiment, unless the experimenters know enough of their material and craft to warrant an exhibition, which is more than a sketch, or a mass of sketches for an inchoate impulse? When all is said and done, there is for us in the West only one idiom of consciously creative dancing. The five positions of classical ballet may be embroidered upon indefinitely. It is a rigid medium only when rigidly developed. It accepts and assimilates influences from outside of its regimen, from folk-dancing to Dalcroze. If Wigman had anything to offer it could assimilate Wigman. Classical ballet teaches precision, a knowledge of the formal handling of the human body by no means artificial. It does not cramp one's style any more than good manners. It does not crush individuality except when the individual is an exhibitionist, a compensator for some personal lack of prestige. It teaches the dignity of the universal, the anonymous, the interest inherent in the *object* of expression. People who find classical ballet outworn either know only superficially of its exterior or enough to be frightened lazily by the rigors of its routine. There is no easy short cut to it — but it is no more difficult to learn how to dance *well* than to skate, or sail, or shoot, or ride or play tennis *well*. It is a question of form and of the excellence of the individual in that form.

It would be wonderful if the League of Composers could found a ballet for use in their performances. The best dancers in the country today are probably Rosina Galli of the Metropolitan Opera House, whose memorable Petrushka will be revived next year; Ruth Page of Chicago, who has done fine work in the "Histoire d'un Soldat"; Harriet Hoctor of the Ziegfeld circuit; Tamara Geva, now in "Three's a Crowd," but shortly entering the talkies, and the Albertina Rasch girls. These people might occasionally teach or star, with the background of a school as corps de ballet. Such painters as John Marin, Covarubias, or Diego Rivera could collaborate on the decor. Georges Balanchine at Copenhagen, Serge Lifar at the Paris Opera, Leonide Massine at the Roxy in New York are all brilliant and practiced choreographers. They could no doubt be induced to appear here.

Americans appreciate good dancing. They go to the play too often because there is no place else to go. The drama weakens yearly, for its only present vein, naturalism, has been better tapped by the talkies. They go to the talkies, too often, to be hypnotized into an unquestioning stare. Lyricism and ritual, the poetry of human bodies in fluid action are as exciting and amusing today as they ever were. They could be made remunerative. A half-educated public awaits a good classical ballet.

Perhaps it is not too much to hope that next year the League of Composers will give us Strawinsky's "Apollo, Leader of the Muses" in the wonderful choreography of Balanchine — a masterpiece of classical dancing brought up to date, with the costumes by Chanel, and decor by whatever American could improve on Bauchant; — R. E. Jones or Aline Bernstein, whose "Orpheus in Hades" at Westchester was such a perfect background for Ballet. And perhaps on the same-to-be-memorable evening Strawinsky's "Renard" with Lifar's acrobatics or a *good* ballet by Prokofiev, "The Prodigal Son"; — or a Mexican dance, or anything but Wigmanism, to show that such organizations as the League of Composers are worthy successors to the greatness of Diaghilev.

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN

FILM CHRONICLE

F. W. MURNAU

A week or so before the opening of *Tabu*, an automobile speeding along a California highway plunged over an embankment and carried F. W. Murnau to his death. The loss his death brought has been variously estimated; but, definitely, it has made a gap in the small circle of directors whose work, principally in the silent movie, had distinction. Death removed the chance of further collaboration between two men, Flaherty and Murnau, whose work together on *Tabu* produced as fine results as that other noteworthy collaboration between Eisenstein and Alexandrov produced in *Old and New* and *Ten Days That Shook the World.*

When the German-made *Last Laugh* was released in this country for the first time, in the twenties, a definite movie method could be seen working toward a definite end. Murnau had done what a number of people had been hoping for a long time could be done: the movie camera was made to do things other than simply elaborate subtitles. Charlie Chaplin had, of course, taken a confessedly banal idea in *A Woman of Paris* and cut out all the pictorial and subtitle verbiage thick in previous pictures. Murnau had taken a fairly complex idea and found adequate camera devices to express it. The pantomime everyone had thought to be the derived art of the movies was not discoverable in *The Last Laugh.* The doorman got drunk, but not in the way a pantomimic actor with subordinate properties got drunk; the camera did it for him. *The Last Laugh*, in fact, stated and solved a series of problems in movie technique: continuity of idea and time, so that time is not a lapse, a space between actions, but a development of action; the relation between the actor and the objects about him, and the convincing establishment of this relation as a real and moving one for the spectator; the possibilities of distortion and of abstraction. A hotel livery glittered before the adoring eyes of a whole community. Time passed in the lives of the people on the screen, not by means of words, not even by direct gestures of the actors; instead, windows were opened on a courtyard, bedding was hung out to air, the sun moved so much further across a dark wall. Time passed visibly and actually. Events that stirred people crashed immediately before the eyes of the spectator, as they did before the eyes of the persons touched: doors flashed in elongations, a trunk toppled down, carrying with it prestige, in a series of light waves and buttons on a uniform assumed enormous proportions.

It is interesting to note that an attempt was made by Josef von Sternberg, in the recent *Dishonored*, to establish some continuity between idea and time by superimposing the progress of one scene on another whose progress had not yet been completed. And it is interesting to note that only once or twice was von Sternberg's cloudy method successful, when the foregoing scene lingered like a memory-image in the action of the following one. Otherwise the problems stated in *The Last Laugh* receive attention only from a few directors like Lubitsch and Eisenstein.

Sometime after the success of *The Last Laugh*, Murnau came to America to work for Fox. When *Sunrise* was completed, the marvels of news reels with actual sounds were only just bursting on a public eager for imitation. George Bernard Shaw was seen and heard to be cute and Fascist soldiers on horseback deployed and shouted and clomped-clomped-clomped endlessly over paving stones for very attentive and astonished eyes, before *Sunrise* was shown. For forty-five minutes thereafter *Sunrise* was unexcelled among movies. The next forty-five minutes of *Sunrise* displayed the heaviness of German humor.

Sunrise may not appear in retrospect as important as *The Last Laugh*. *Sunrise* was less obviously experimental and more complete. The manner and method of *Sunrise* was so individual, so self-contained that any attempt to accept the precise statement of problems it contained would have to result in a mere imitation of the solution to these problems. The relation of sound to gestures and motions of the actors was explored; the cry of a horn, for instance, identified, without imitating, the cry of a woman through her cupped hands to searchers after a drowned body. The sound-meaning was immediate, not associative as previous musical accompaniments, like "hurry music" or "Yankee Doodle" assisting Revolutionary soldiers to fight the British, had been. A trolley car bumping through a countryside, with two distraught, unhappy, frightened people and the placid motorman, into a city was not just a scenic event like the covered wagons that had spread out over plains under cottonwhite clouds in numerous movie "epics." The trolley car was a vehicle of emotion, not simply a means of getting from one scene to another in the picture.

There was much to be admired in *Sunrise* apart from its total effect: the composition of the shots, the dramatic pace of events, papers blown with people before a rain-filled wind; but *Sunrise* bored audiences who were not bored with the manœuvres of Fascist soldiers. And *Four Devils* came in the horrible period when movies starting out as silent had talking sequences jammed into them.

Murnau went to the South Seas with Robert Flaherty, who had made *Moana* and *Nanook of the North.* The company backing them failed; Murnau himself financed the expedition. *Tabu* was shown for the first time on March 18th this year.

Whether Flaherty had learned his lesson when *Moana* was butchered to program length and accordingly insisted upon presenting Paramount with a completed film to release, is a question idle beside the fact that the editing in *Tabu* is simply amazing. Events seem to take their impetus from the same source that flings the sudden spear into the fish in the opening sequences, from the water-chutes down which the bathers so precipitantly ride. The idyllic mood is established and never lost. Not a shot is displayed which does not concern and accentuate the story and the mood. There is no lingering over beautiful landscapes. The landscape folds into the mood of the picture, just as the islanders appear to live with equal grace in and out of water, or as the drowning lover finally merges with the broadening sight of the sea. In comparison, *Moana* seems a trifle wordy with camera pictures even in the cut version, until one remembers that *Moana* was a record of South Sea Island life and that comparison between the two arises only through the accident of like locales.

The manners of white civilization impinge directly upon the two lovers' flight from the tabu's bane; but not in the form of brutal traders and plutocrats blind to simplicity. The festive dancing only is different, the payment of bills prevents the lovers' further flight. The white touch is sure and firm and hampering but it plays the subordinate part the landscape plays. The idyll is flawless.

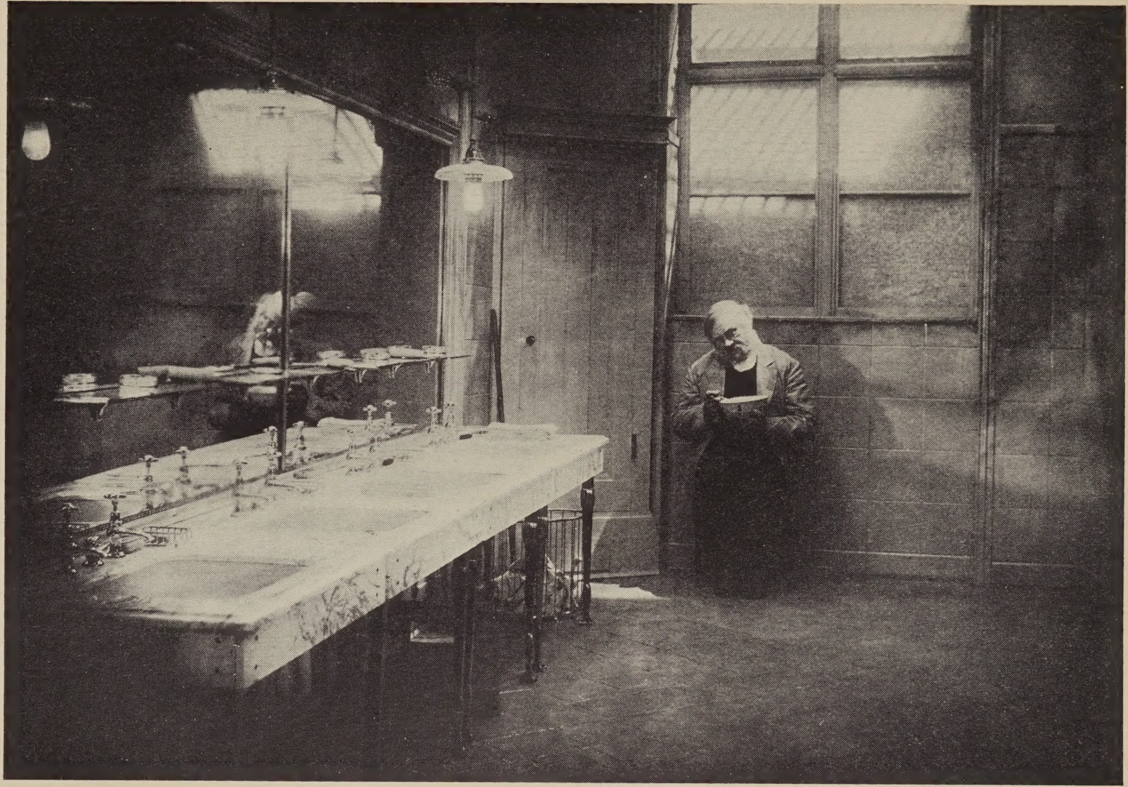
In *Tabu*, the camera under Murnau's direction played again the sensitive inclusive eye. A milieu was created, events shaped in it their enlarged proportions: clapping hands increase their tensity as the movements of the dancers rise to a pitch of exaltation which is broken instantaneously, ominously, by the flinging of a wreath; a knife in the hands of the priest cuts a rope and as intense a climax as the films have ever presented is remembered. The brain keeps the image of the swimmer's hands on a rope taut, then slashed in two over the edge of a boat.

What is unfortunate about a good movie is its ephemeral quality. A director who wishes to study a predecessor cannot seek out, as a painter can, a museum where the predecessor is always on view. He has to be contented with what he can get immediately from the screen, and he gets usually the gross effects rather than the mechanism by which the effects are obtained. The value which Murnau's work might have for a student director, if it were accessible over a long period of time, is inestimable. For the problems which Murnau stated in all of his pictures are problems persistent in the making of good movies. New solutions may be accumulated and a different order of problems arise, but the problems of editing, continuity in idea and time, of distortions, abstraction and the development of movies beyond the mere imitation of nature or the stage, remain constant.

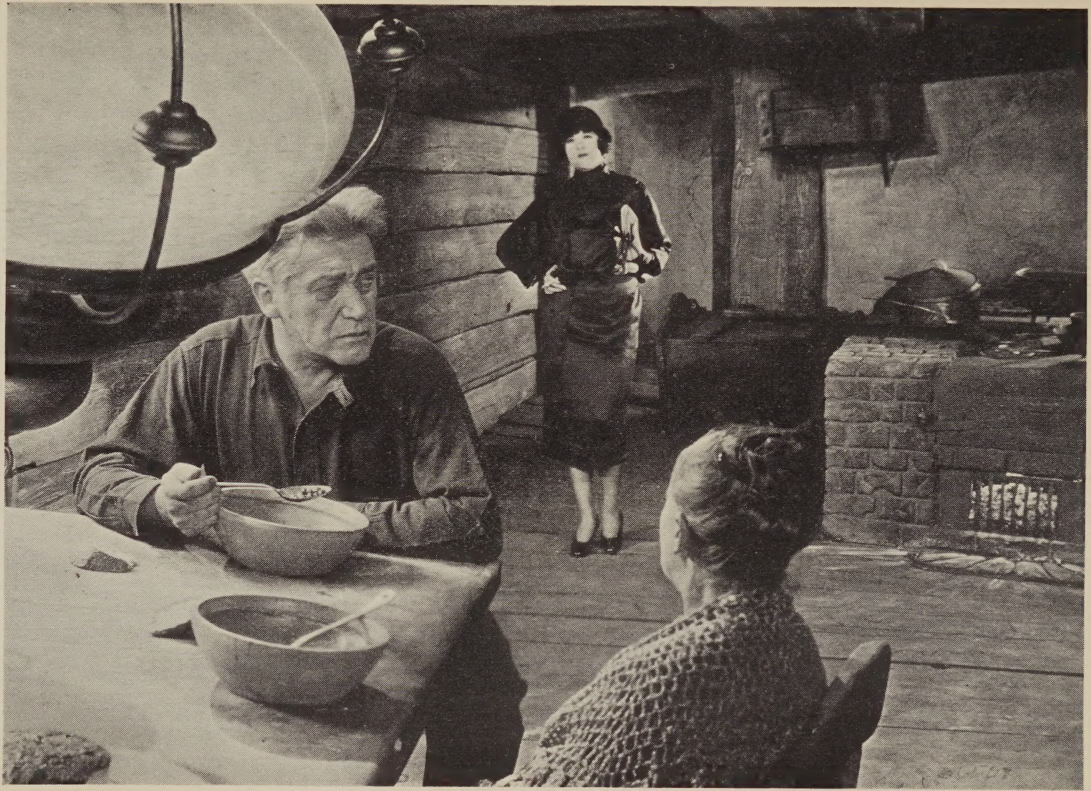
KENNETH WHITE

The Last Laugh, 1925
(*Emil Jannings*)

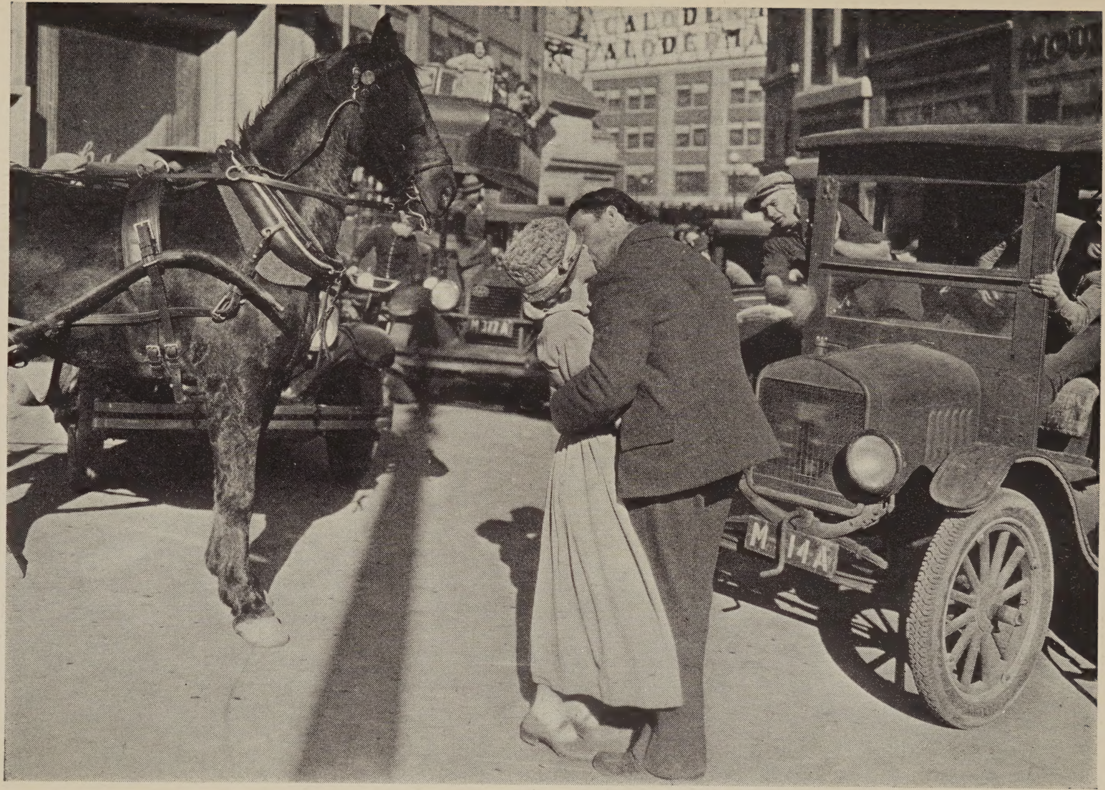
Directed by
F. W. Murnau



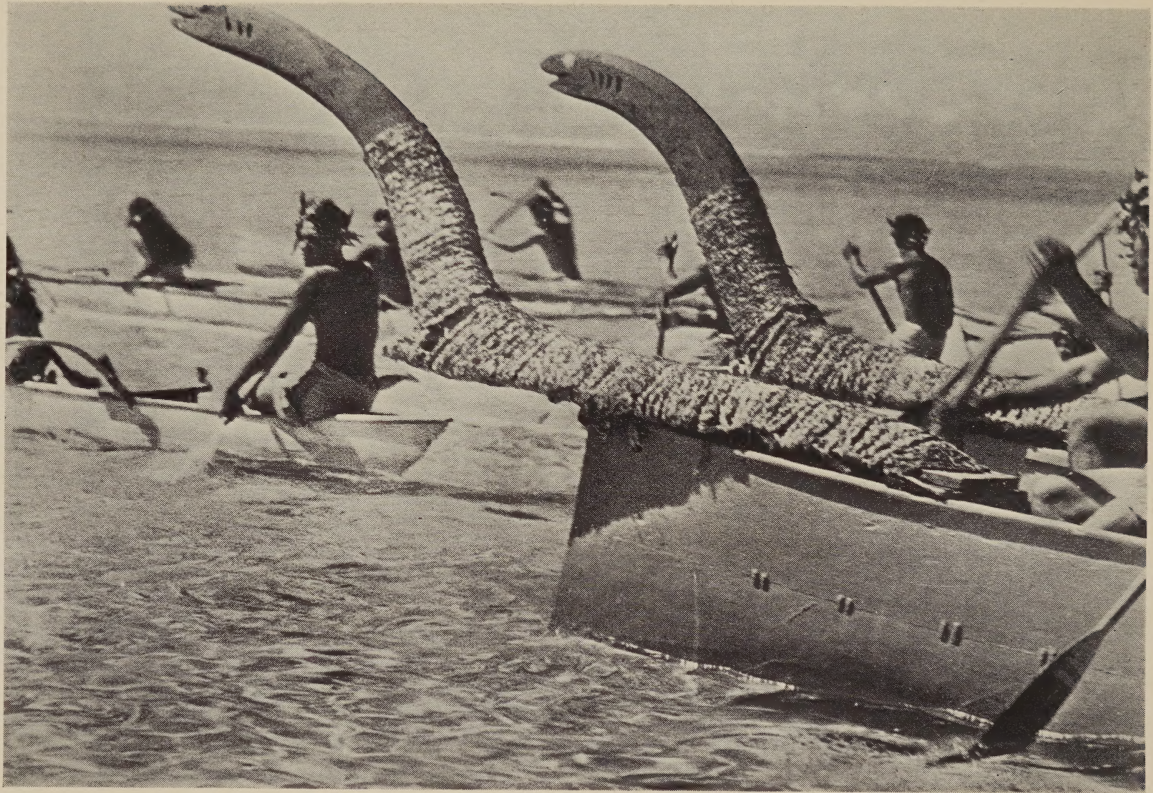
The Last Laugh, 1925 (*Emil Jannings*) *Directed by* F. W. Murnau



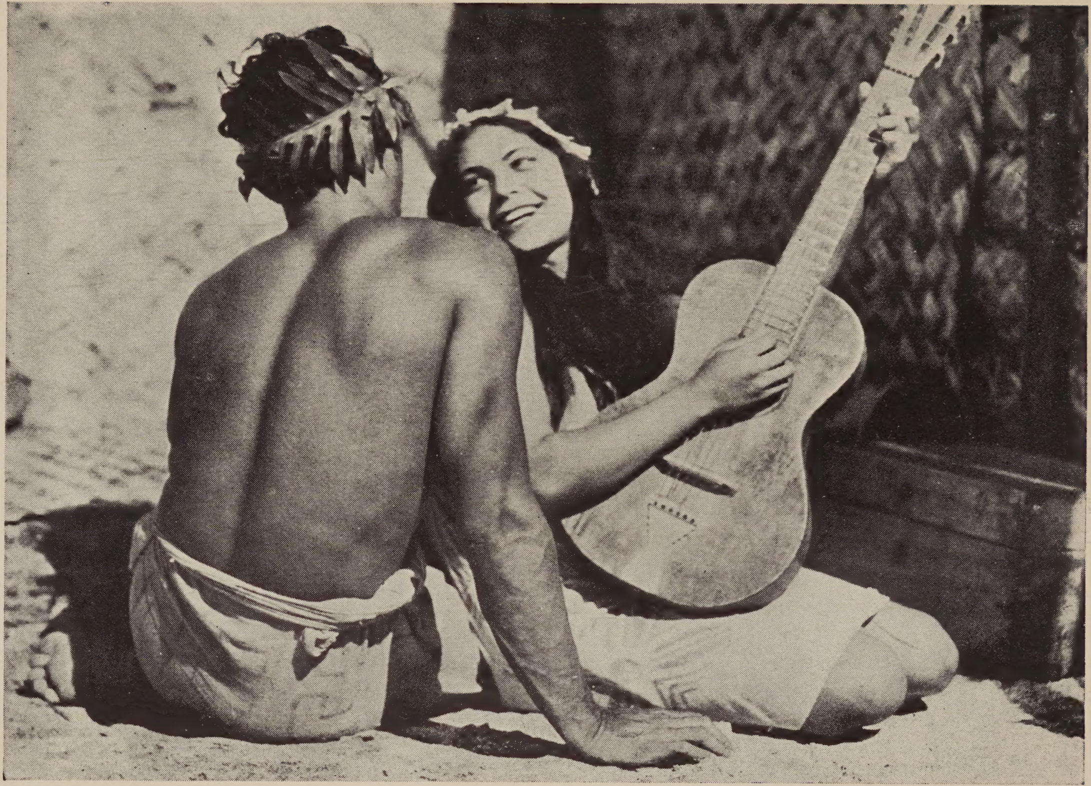
Sunrise, 1927 *Directed by* F. W. Murnau



Sunrise, 1927 *Directed by* F. W. Murnau



Tabu, 1930–31 *Directed by* F. W. Murnau



Tabu, 1930–31 *Directed by* F. W. Murnau

ARCHITECTURE CHRONICLE

MASTERPIECES OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE UNITED STATES*

The book is a masterpiece, a pattern and example of architectural monographs. With the aid of its photographs (almost none of which are tricked) its plans, sections, elevations, profiles and details, it presents eighteen buildings as they were executed, — a very different matter from presenting eighteen buildings as they were designed. Many of the official descriptions which introduce each building are modest; all are more or less informative, many clearly state how the architects met the requirements.

If the book were as admirable in selection as it is in presentation, it would be remarkable indeed, but unfortunately it is not. Cret, 'a member of the Jury himself, can hardly dwell upon the competence of the judges, but can at least vouch for their impartiality.' Let us examine this impartiality.

Three of the eleven Jurymen, Corbett, Hood and Magonigle, are represented by one building each; and Cret by three. Both Kendal and Mead are on the Jury, and may have contributed to the design of McKim's Boston Public Library and White's Madison Square Presbyterian Church. Five of the architects represented were also at times on the office roll of McKim, Mead and White: Magonigle, Bacon, Gmelin, Harmon and Gilbert, who is represented by two works. Goodhue is represented by two works built after the dissolution of his partnership with Cram, who is a member of the Jury. It apparently did not occur to Aldrich, Medary and Sternfeld, the remaining Jurymen, that impartiality should extend to types of design fundamentally at variance with McKim's types.

---

* Measured and drawn by Edward Warren Hoak and Willis Humphrey Church. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1930. Price $20.

The preface by Paul Cret repeats the explanation of the foreword by two of his pupils who carried out the work.

The choice of the buildings was entrusted to a Jury.

Of the eighteen buildings illustrated, three are in what is called the Modern style, three are in the Antique style, six in the Mediæval and six in the Renaissance. Of those in what is called the Modern style, the Liberty Memorial (1928) is of Antique, and the Traymore, (completed 1918) of Byzantine inspiration. The third, the Nebraska State Capitol (uncompleted), is the most purely eclectic of all.

If this book is not as good in subject-matter as in presentation, that is because the Jury held together for the most part with personal and æsthetic conviction, and then, in order to be impartial, loosened these bonds. Convictions and loosening result in the exclusion of some good work, and in the inclusion of some bad. Persons who subscribe to Eclecticism are incapable of judgment beyond the limits it imposes.

This book may be considered largely as a monograph on the influence of McKim, Mead and White. Platt in his Freer Gallery (completed 1920) departed from McKim only in competence. Gilbert and Cret depart from him slightly in taste. Gilbert's Detroit Public Library (completed 1921) is almost indistinguishable in manner from Cret's Detroit Institute (1920–1921) and Pan-American Union (1907–1912) whose pre-Columbian American motives depart from the Renaissance manner of McKim no further than Cass Gilbert departed, and are connected not with modernist primitivism, but with the Mediæval tendency. Cret in his Antique Library of Indianapolis (completed 1917, One Gold Medal) as in the two Renaissance monuments by which he is represented, and in his defeated competitive Antique drawings for the Nebraska Capitol conforms to the restraining precepts of McKim. Gilbert's Mediæval Woolworth Building (completed 1913, Gold Medal) is no more essentially a departure from these precepts than is his Detroit Public Library, and what is true of the Woolworth Building is true of Hood's inferior Tribune Tower (1922–1925, Two Gold Medals). Nor does Gmelin's Barclay-Vesey Building (completed 1926, One Gold Medal) make an essential departure from McKim's method of design, though it is inspired by the design for the West Point Chapel which Goodhue won in competition from McKim. Harmon's Shelton Hotel, Mediæval as it is, might not have been offensive to McKim, so closely does it resemble (at the expense of functional and æsthetic distortion of the fenestration) Nero's Tower, which rises above one of McKim's favorite parts of Rome.

The Renaissance Boston Library and Madison Square Church, the most beautiful buildings of this collection, are adequately published in a separate and older monograph. McKim surpassed his immediate predecessors; his followers seldom equal him. His Albertiesque front for the Boston Library does not perceptibly darken its windows, but architectural superstition, in the shape of an Antique colonnade, darkens the windows of Cret's Public Library. Gilbert's Public Library is darkened by a Renaissance loggia. A Romanesque loggia injures the design of Harmon's Shelton Hotel (1922–1924). These able planners injured these designs by relying upon the hall-marks of good taste as substitutes for design.

The practical and the æsthetic purpose of any loggia or colonnade is to afford shade. Where the practical exigencies of the work do not permit shade, these motives should not be used. If they are used, they will make a shade, and the less shade these motives are allowed to make, the worse they will be. No loggia or colonnade of whatever proportions can be agreeable if it stands at less than seven feet from the main wall. This is the least our touch requires from our eyes. Stanford White bore this minimum in his mind when he designed the portico of the Madison Square Church. The earlier designers who depended on historic form were not content with pencilled elevations. Many a loggia built in America after McKim's death (1909) if it had been painted upon the façade which carries it would then be actually less of a sham than it is now. Too many colonnades look as though the contractor had shipped the columns in enormous stone packing boxes, set them up on end, removed the excelsior from between them, and had then stood off and gasped at their small refinements and great cost.

It is not unjust that Cret should be represented by more monuments than any other single architect. He is probably the most tactful and resourceful planner in the country. The merits of his work, conspicuous even without his own praise, throw several other monuments illustrated into the shade, or rather, into bold relief against the impenetrable darkness as to why in the world they were included. Cret's Indianapolis Public Library is almost perfect.

Its chief fault, that it drives the circulation through a reading room, is largely mitigated by the fact that this room serves the main purpose of delivery, and is supplemented by a further reading room. The fault cannot be judged, but can only be accepted. It was unavoidable, and is merely one of the many instances which go to show that no one can design a perfect building.

Cret's Library handles its practical requirements, with every facility which the Boston Library (1887–1895 or 98) lacks. Many architectural critics would contend that if Cret did a good library, McKim did a bad one, and that if the one is included among the masterpieces of architecture in the United States, the other should not be. I cannot agree with them. The Boston Library has practical shortcomings, but in fulfilling the requirement of beauty, often fulfills the practical requirement better than it would be fulfilled if it had been the only aim. The court is not only beautiful (while the light wells of similar buildings are ugly) but this court, determined upon, probably for other than practical reasons, is more practical than a light well. McKim used his Renaissance archæology with ingenious tact. Throughout the structure it is difficult to tell exactly where archæology has interfered with use. Many of its features are useful beyond the calculations of any purely practical design. In the beauty of its forms, the Library was intended to serve purposes whose definition leads to the study of the far reaches of human nature.

Here Cret falls short. He is, to be sure, more than a merely able planner. His plans, together with the ingenuity and amplitude which is of the true nature of architecture, proceed from personal conviction and deep apprehension of truth. No such conviction marks his surface design. His detail is more shoddy, his sense of color more sophisticated and rudimentary at one and the same time, than even Cram's detail and color. He is guided no more surely in proportion. He has no manner in which one can feel, as one feels in Cram's Georgian, that he is misled by his more dominant manners. No work of such a designer as Cret can be a chief work.

Not even Louis Sullivan had more æsthetic conviction than Stanford White. Although I believe that the Madison Square Church (completed 1906, destroyed 1919, One Gold Medal) might be dismissed from top to bottom as it has been torn down, because it was designed as an exterior, whereas the nature of a church is to be an interior, still I believe that like the Boston Library, the Church is a chief work. Its destruction was an injury to the Nation. Let modernist critics who do not regret its loss because it was executed in an historic style examine its detail, and they will see that Stanford White, in his adaptation of old detail, lost nothing of the freshness which Sullivan found in his invention of new detail. The details of the parapet which crowns the Church are as fresh, as similar motives invented by Sullivan. The same simple common sense which makes the mason and the architect members of one fraternity made White's detail more truly architectural than Sullivan's details. For it is only common sense to depend upon familiar elements whose results are calculable. The Eclectics are right in saying that a poet need not invent a new language.

But poets change language as White changed the manner of Northern Italian Renaissance. We all know what happens when language does not change. What happens is that it does change, and changes for the worse. This is what happened when Platt used Italian Renaissance. Superficial charm, if such were possible to so bad a scheme, could have made the Freer Gallery approach architecture. Its surface is in every particular as repellent as the plan. Its restraint in ornament, only serves to point the fact that it is without proportion and without scale. There is no reason why publicity should have been given this repellent spot. Every vice of plan of which it is compacted is illustrated by its opposite virtue in Cret's Detroit Institute.

The æsthetic merits of the Detroit Institute are, like the virtues of the Detroit Library, secured at a loss to the invisible building which hovers within its mass. The rear of the Detroit Library, like the rear of the New York Library, shows up the fronts as empty mockeries. So with Cret's Detroit Institute, the precision whereby the balcony of the theatre is supplied with its own exit and a staircase which roofs the exits from the orchestra level is a true and rare beauty in itself. The articulation of these exits imposes a false form upon their real form, and confuses the working. It affords one of many recent examples, which are meritorious when they approach the solutions of Le Corbusier in conception, and which are to be condemned where they differ from him in execution.

As McKim was the leader of the Classic Academy, so Cram was the leader of the Gothic Academy. Under his leadership, Gothic has become the style in which to build to the honor of God and Mammon. Were Cram bothered by modesty as little as Cret, this book would afford a better opportunity to examine the counter academy. Nevertheless, it affords considerable opportunity.

Most use of Gothic was offensive to McKim, but had he been capable of designing in Gothic with Goodhue's plausibility, he might not have found the style offensive. McKim would scarcely, I think, have taken Corbett's neo Neo-Gothic Bush Terminal Building (1916–1917) seriously as architectural design. He would have said that it accepted the facts of engineering too passively and that its "architecture" was too obviously applied. It is, however, in my opinion, the only chief work here illustrated in the Mediæval style. I do not believe that the Jury could have understood Corbett's playful use of the Gothic and have included the examples of the application of Mediæval form to commercial structures by Price, Hood, and Gilbert, or the examples of what is called Modern style by Magonigle and Goodhue. The Bush Terminal is a true modern design, recognized as such when it was built, though lately fallen out of fashion. Fashion will return to the use of quasi-historic ornament.

The church of St. Vincent's Ferrer (completed 1916) marks the change from Goodhue's archæological to his free manner. His free manner is now preferred above his archæological. His admirers grieve for the many years which they believe him to have wasted while he designed for Cram. But St. Vincent's was the last of Goodhue's good work. It is most satisfactory where it is more archæological. His earlier works display a freer originality than is to be found in his later works, which are now supposed to be more free and original. Goodhue remained so long a Gothic eclectic, that when at length he launched upon his flight towards modern style, he fell into all eclectic faults at once.

When he designed West Point, he did something not done before, that might have been done at any time. This was monumental architecture. In St. Vincent's, competent only where he did what had been done before, he was timid when he attempted to be original. The asymmetry in width between the right and left aisles and transepts shows a true understanding of picturesque design. Its more formal liveliness than could result from bilateral symmetry is not immediately recognizable, and yet affects one's first and later impressions of the whole to which it gives such scale as could not have been given otherwise. It may have been dictated by practical exigencies. It was not done to make a pretty plan, but was conceived with understanding of its final effect. This effect is very far from original.

The west front of St. Vincent's, though by no means original, is unusual enough to be distinguished and yet has no distinction. It was designed upon a foolproof skeleton of good proportion and unity. But as it stands, it seems to be a tentative colored plaster model set up by a conscientious designer; not a front at all, but an isolated bay of an unexecuted flank. Yet the idea behind it could have made a fine front. Doubtless it would have been finer if Goodhue had not retained, for no reason, one of the chief shortcomings of Gothic, namely a roof, which though it is large, rests upon the vaults as a hat rests upon a head for which it is too small.

Yet many Gothic churches have such roofs and are chief works. Why is not St. Vincent's a chief work? Surely the window tracery is boldly conceived and exuberantly executed. Here lies the building's failure. The window tracery is boldly conceived and exuberantly executed because window tracery is a commonplace of Gothic design. Where the design departs from the commonplace to the unusual, namely in the two buttressing turrets on either side of the window, the conception is but half-formed and the execution, timid and mean. In fact, the building is nothing but a piece of constructed ornament. As an idea it was intended to be the reverse.

It is a city church, with not a green thing in sight. A Subway runs beneath it. It is hemmed in by concrete streets. Yet its ashlar is built up with the most lasciviously careful rubble, — rubble as irritating and affected as a man would be who chose to run into a reception clad in a golf suit. The picturesque ashlar, as treacherous as the picturesque disposition of the interior is sure, makes the timid ornament seem to be constructive work. The relief of the figures which crown the turrets and of the blind tracery upon the walls is not enough to make them hold their own against the ashlar. The ashlar in greater relief than they, usurps their place. The crowning statues would not have been timid were not Goodhue thrilled and intimidated, over-encouraged and frightened by his supposition that there was something original in what he had conceived. As he went on being "original" his work grew worse and worse. The final result was the Nebraska State Capitol; which (though like Magonigle's Liberty Memorial, it ravished the Eclectics as a free and original masterpiece) is, like it, a bore.

The Memorial to Liberty and the Nebraska Capitol, false Modern pieces, would lead designers down a blind alley. The Jury that included those and Price's Hotel Traymore did not understand modernism. The Hotel is by no means a bore, it is too ugly ever to be that. Ugly in almost the way in which the most beautiful monuments of architecture are ugly; it too, like St. Vincent's, is much concerned with originality and makes stale mistakes. The upper stories are as wildly out of scale with the lower stories, as they are inconsistent with them in character. The lower stories are matter-of-fact. The upper stories, extraordinary flight of fancy, call to mind dreams of Byzantium and Baghdad. Almost more suggestive of architecture than the Grand Canyon itself, their fantastic pile would hover like a mirage in indeterminable relation to the lower mass; were it not, to prevent it from so hovering, placed upon a preposterously overhanging string course, which anchors it in place, but which, because of the deep shadow it casts, makes it float all the higher like a balloon. Because the Hotel Traymore is ugly and preposterous, many people think that it holds out possibilities to a future architecture of high beauty. It does so only for people who know nothing about the Modern. Lots of buildings in America have in purity the virtues towards which the Traymore approaches in debased form. The works of Richardson, Sullivan and Wright, the most distinguished and most suggestive works in America, are represented in this book only by a dull and distorted reflection.

The revival of the Antique revival, initiated at the Chicago World's Fair under the dominance of McKim, has become the official style for official American architecture. It is important to examine two official monuments of this official style. The Antique Lincoln Memorial (1901–1923; Two Gold Medals) was designed by one of McKim's boys, who where he departed from McKim, fell into errors. Pope's Antique Temple of the Scottish Rite (completed 1916, One Gold Medal) is a superior work. Pope, a man of greater ability than either Platt or Bacon, is like them, a reflecting surface for the precepts of McKim.

The Temple of the Scottish Rite may be a chief work of architecture; if it be architecture at all, to house a club in the Mausoleum of Hallicarnassus and to make up for putting the kitchen and dining-room in the cellar by devising melodramatic effects of lighting to make it live up to its name of Temple. The clubhouse combines, to be sure, a great many elements of architecture. Externally it is well proportioned. Its sphinxes, though they are badly formed, are not abortive like the sphinxes of the Liberty Memorial, and do not prevent the front from being almost too impressive. The rear, which unfortunately, is not shown in photograph, is as good as any stylar work of the first Greek revival. There are many delightful aspects of the interior. The decorations of the subterranean dining-room have the charm, at least in line, of all well-executed Pompeiian work. The lighting throughout is barbarously imaginative. The symbolism throughout shows that the Gothic is not the only style where architectural effect can be achieved by literary means. It makes a few slips in style. The Grand Commander's Suite is in the sort of revived Georgian which we associate with Bank Directors' rooms, and the egg-shaped dome under the central pylon is more reminiscent of Second Empire use of Baroc forms than of any First Empire use of the forms of the Bee Hive Tombs. But the chief faults of the building are difficult to find. They seem almost to have crystallized and to run throughout the stone of which it is constructed. Insensitive where it departs from the Antique style, it is more insensitive where it conforms. The architect, straining every exigence of design and function to make a stalwart interior, reduced the Ionic almost to Doric proportions. Greater monumentality would have been given the outside had the Doric been used there and the Ionic used as an interior order only. Although there is nothing in the building so bad as the Empire fireplaces in Cret's Public Library, which are placed directly under window openings; still, like these fireplaces, the Antique Temple of the Scottish Rite shows how far design can depart from architecture if the author suppose that by obeying rules of proportion and by employing assorted elements of architecture, Whist! Presto-Chango! he can make architecture.

Yet, the Temple of the Scottish Rite is more nearly architecture than the Lincoln Memorial. The first design for this Memorial (to be found facing page 200 of Moore's *Life of Charles Follen McKim*) presents a screen of columns supporting a flat roof. The central portion is decastyle and is flanked by porticoes with three columns on the main front. In the finally executed Memorial, the wings are removed and the front is made do-decastyle.

Now, a composition of colossal Greek Doric, presenting twelve columns to the front, prepares the mind for a proud structure indeed. It does not prepare the mind for a mere screen of columns, however monumental, but for a mass at least square in plan; more probably the mass would present an even longer range of columns along its sides. Its inside would be deep and most impressively badly lighted. But the Lincoln Memorial fulfills none of these hopes. It is nothing but an octostyle peristyle turned to present its flank to the main axis.

The vacuous disappointment which overpowers the visitor to this elaborately inadequate Memorial is due entirely to its position on the site. If the design of 1901 had been carried out, no sense of disappointment on this score would have been legitimate. If the Temple had been traditionally placed, there would have been no disappointment on this score. But one inevitably expects greater length than breadth from the Temple form, and one cannot be satisfied with less than a square. In such monumental structures, actual dimensions are of no avail. No mere size could prevent the back wall of this building from seeming to strike in the face anyone who enters from its portals. This unfortunate effect is emphasized, because although one expects the building from its exterior appearance to be at least dim inside, if not actually, as it holds forth every promise of being, gloomy, that is to say in architecture, mysterious, yet the inside is lighted in most efficient manner through its roof. This is one theory as to the lighting of Greek temples, but certainly they were not lighted by skylights. Possibly by some form of translucent tile. Where this may have been done, one knew beforehand that it had been done by looking at the roof. If this were a practise for housing the Greek cults (as I do not believe) then the

Greeks were less wise than the Egyptians, whose temples are perfect examples of æsthetic engineering in progressive and increasing gloom; or then the Hindoos, whose rock-hewn temples contrive the most sublime effect of lighting known to æsthetics; that is to say, lighting from an aperture placed above the door, so that the light seems to enter as the visitor enters, and from a source not immediately perceived. The light from the enormous doorways of a Greek temple, falling full upon the sheltered image as the visitor enters, affords all the light which is legitimately to be required of the cella, which by every form of its design proclaims this to be its awaited effect. The effect which awaited the visitor to the Greek cella filled him with the feelings which he came there to procure, even though the image upon which the beams of light from the doorway fell where as evilly executed as the image of Lincoln to which Bacon's Doric Temple affords translucent shelter. In all this architectural monograph there is not a piece of first-rate sculpture, and of them all, the image of Lincoln is by no means the best. Where Greek cellas were lighted from the roof, or from galleries, we may be sure the sculpture was first-rate.

A great deal could be done to improve the Lincoln Memorial if it were roofed in stone. You would not then be able to read the inscriptions on the spot, but this, I think, would be a disadvantage less than the advantage of not being able to take in at a single glance the poverty of its proportions and decorations. It would also veil the sight of the image of Lincoln dropping jog by jog into the floor as one climbs up step by step, and then like a jack-in-the-box popping up again with a great rush. If at the same time that the roof were covered, the projection of the cella above the cornice of the peristyle were lowered, another serious fault of the building would be removed. Is it too much to ask, that the building should be turned on its main axis through 90° but not that lateral porches be supplied?

Even were all this done, it would be an incongruous monument. The proportions of the order are noble. We are told that they express the nobility of the hero to whom the State has seen fit to render honors so closely impinging upon the Divine. We are told that the Neo-Antique was popular in Lincoln's middle-west. This last argument is perfectly irrelevant to the character of Lincoln's personality. Whether the Doric Order is the proper expression of that personality, is a matter for mystical debate. The effect of the reflecting basin which stretches between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument is the finest conceivable. A mere reflection of the Washington Monument would be as inadequate as it would be inappropriate for the honoring of Lincoln, but the sublime effect of this use of grass, water, trees, and stone, suggests that the appropriate Memorial to Abraham Lincoln would have been a grove of trees. This has plenty enough of the Antique. Many sacred places in the ancient world consisted of little more than groves of trees. It also has overtones of the pioneer we are asked to believe Lincoln to have been. There is nothing in creation whether of nature or of man that is more sublime than a grove of trees. That these trees should be planted in a formal design goes without saying.

"The universal acclaim which the monument has enjoyed is a proof of the success of its designer and the taste of its admirers. In 1923 the American Institute of Architects staged a colorful yet dignified pageant before the monument, and in the evening as the building was bathed in soft artificial light, in the presence of the President of the United States and representatives from all the architectural organizations in the country presented the designer with the Gold Medal of the Institute. In all the throng there was no jealous voice to call it undeserved." These words of Dr. Edgell are extremely important for the understanding of American taste. Their utility stops at that point. Whether or not Louis Sullivan had a voice in the throng his voice is not jealous of architects but only jealous for architecture as it says:

"For architecture, be it known, is dead. Let us therefore lightly dance upon its grave, strewing roses as we glide. Let us gather, in procession, in the night, in the rain, and make soulful, fluent, epicene orations to the living dead we neuters eulogize."

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT

BOOK REVIEWS

SOME OPINIONS OF EL GRECO

La Jeunesse du Peintre El Greco. *Par J.-F. Willumsen. Paris: Crès.* 1927. 2 *vols.* 597 *pages and* 747 *pages,* 450 *illustrations and* 106 *plates. $9.00.*

El Greco. *Von August L. Mayer (in German). Berlin, Klinkhardt & Biermann.* 1931. 175 *pages.* 122 *illustrations. $9.00.*

El Greco. *By Frank Rutter. New York: E. Weyhe.* 1930. 114 *pages.* 85 *plates. $8.75.*

The Birth of Western Painting, *a history of color, form, and iconography, illustrated from the paintings of Mistra and Mount Athos, of Giotto and Duccio, and of El Greco. By Robert Byron and David Talbot Rice.* 236 *pages.* 94 *plates. New York: Knopf.* 1931. *$10.00.*

Men of Art. *By Thomas Craven. New York: Simon & Shuster.* 1931. 525 *pages.* 40 *plates.* $3.00.

El Greco's Italian Period, *article in Art Studies. By Ellis Waterhouse. Harvard & Princeton.* 1931.

No good full-length study has yet been made of El Greco. The present studies derive most of their thesis from Willumsen, although none except Waterhouse have the honesty to say so. (On second thought Craven must also be excepted, since he seems to have read practically nothing on the subject.) Although Willumsen's book has directed the bent of all subsequent studies, it is itself invalidated by its uncritical acceptance of all data. Yet prodigious research and enthusiasm has gone into the making of his two big volumes. To illustrate the influences on El Greco's youth, Willumsen wrote a wholesale history of Byzantine art, of Italian painting, architecture and travel, of other Greeks in Italy, and even visited the houses where El Greco may have worked. Since, however, so little is definitely known about El Greco in Italy, it is impossible to relate most of this to him.

Mayer gives a fairly good account of El Greco. The brief biography is lucid and accurate. The body of the book attempts a chronology of the paintings in which, however, Mayer almost never gives any evidence for his dating. The illustrations gather a useful body of photos, although with some unaccountable omissions, and the book is a good popular condensation of Mayer's big book on El Greco.

I can see no excuse for Rutter's book. The author may have written it in order not to be left out of the fashionable hue and cry of "Velasquez is dead, long live El Greco," the silly slogan started by Meier-Graefe. It is boring and idle to wreck one reputation in order to pedestal some other on the ruins. Rutter has written a book with no method and no perceptions. Like every Englishman brought up on Lewis Carroll's systematic pointlessness (*i.e.* every living Englishman) he has to drag Shakespeare and Shaw into the case (p. 38).

The Birth of Western Painting, *etc.*, *etc.*, is written in a more up-to-date British patter. True to the title, Chapter I launches out on a blast of pompous trumpets: "The universe is eternal, and man, with all substance, bestrides the temporal dimension. . . . This is the Reality of the universe." Not all the book is as useless as this, for it contains an eloquent appeal to the world to rescue the frescoes at Mistra and at Haghios Pavlos on Athos. There are also good parallel illustrations of Duccios and Giottos side by side with exactly identical Byzantine frescoes. The body of the book is a history of the iconoclastic schism, which has nothing to do with the subject. The origin of all this odd jumble is probably to be explained thus: — the authors visited Athos, were thereby stimulated to read Byzantine history, itched for a fashionable way to air their new knowledge, and thus pitched upon poor modish El Greco. The book reminds one of any Balliol tea, with its interminable glibness about obscure and irrelevant facts, and its anxiousness to strike the bon ton of the moment.

If this book shows the failings of the bright young man from Oxford, Thomas Craven's article on El Greco in *Men of Art* shows the no less gloomy failings of the New York journalist. Craven writes more about the "Men" than their "Art" (applause from all readers of *Time*). I have only sketched through the rest of *Men of Art*, but the El Greco chapter seems to be entirely representative. The book irritates because it has good spots and, therefore, ought to be much better as a whole. The author has some pertinent things to say about modern art, and he has tried to break away from the dead "scientific" approach that sees an artist as a mere factor in a biological sequence, a factor no more important than any other single factor. But all this is no excuse for flimsy journalism, for *Daily News* headlines on The Soul of Spain, for a mass of misstatement, unwarranted deductions and errors of fact. Like most American books, it is not written, but SHOUTED.

Of all these studies, Waterhouse's article on *El Greco's Italian Period* is the only honest one, the only one, that is, where all the evidence is impartially presented, where each doubt is scrupulously stated. Wherever one disagrees with Waterhouse (as, for instance, in his including the two little *Espolios* in the Italian period) one finds that he has himself already admitted doubt.

What we really need is a collection of all the documents that now lie hidden in archæological journals: El Greco's bickerings with the Inquisition, his litigations, with the boasts he was always uttering in court, the sonnets that Paravicino and Góngora wrote about him, the inventory of his library, wardrobe and paintings, Pacheco's account of him, etc. I am tired of seeing Clovio's letter as the only document that every book gives in full.

And now, after making rancid remarks about everybody, it is only fair that I set up my own opinions for any comer's pot shot. I claim no value for them other than this: they are not to be found in any of these books.

First, is El Greco a mystic? Or rather, can a mystic be an artist? It would seem impossible from San Juan de la Cruz's definition of mystical experience as "oscuro, confuso, general." An artist must be the exact opposite of each of these. Mystical experience seems to burn out all preoccupation with form. Aquinas, after his illumination, said that all his writings seemed no better than straw. After Savanarola, Botticelli painted less and less, and finally, for the last ten years, nothing. I do not think that one can call El Greco a mystic. He probably used the mystical experience of others much the way Donne and the metaphysical poets used scholasticism, — as an exercise for subtilizing his art.

And now a word about the Soul of Spain. Aside from the black hidalgo elegance, I doubt if El Greco has anything Spanish about him except the heavy weather of the Guadarramas, which only he could dramatize, coming from the glaring chalk of Crete.

The rôle of Italy and Byzantium in El Greco's background has not been very clearly distinguished. Since the Spaniards called him by an *Italian* word for "The Greek," they must have thought him quite as much Italian as Greek. And indeed, his iconography and brushwork derive from Italy by clearly traceable steps, as Waterhouse quite rightly insists. But this Italian iconography and brushwork are made to serve a vision increasingly Byzantine. (El Greco seems perhaps to have fled the powerful creations of Italy like a man dreading to lose the inheritance of his race, an inheritance into which he entered very gradually during the solitude of Toledo.)

The Soviet collection of Russian Icons showed one quite plainly that El Greco's Byzantine airs are not to be sought in frescoes and mosaics, but in the icon painting in which he was first trained. These Russian icons were, of course, mere provincial adaptations of Greek icons, but even so, they reminded me time and again of El Greco. (Real Greek icons might show even closer resemblances.) Sometimes the sharp colors recalled El Greco's *St. Maurice*, with its clashes of cobalt, icy crimson and brass. Some of the landscapes fled upward under flashes of white exactly as the *Vision of Toledo* does. And here and there the *San Bernardino* of the Greco Museum peeped forth from some icon saint who balanced aloft (and how elegantly!) a tiny noddle.

Just as Cèzanne said his aim was "repeindre le Poussin d'après nature," so El Greco might have said that he wanted to paint Byzantine icons over again with Venetian resources. All his saints have an air of wrangling out the schisms that rent Byzantium.

Perhaps El Greco's "mysticism" may be explained by examining his Byzantinism on a deeper level. His approach to the saints is the exact opposite of the Spanish approach. The Spaniards are not satisfied unless they can behold the Madonna so earthily before them that they can name the lace of her handkerchief, unless they see the Christ Child close enough to count his eyelashes. Their Paradise is as exactly weighed and measured as Mahomet's. Zurbarán, the "divino Morales," Montañes and the Valladolid sculptors all worked toward this end. On the other hand, El Greco's background of Greek Orthodoxy made him suppress Christ's human nature in order to glorify His divine nature. A Spanish artist brings the saints down to you on earth, but El Greco whirls you aloft to them in Heaven until your ears are ringing in the thinness. It is because Greek Orthodoxy trained El Greco to disincarnate the saints that he gave them eyes of hallucinated gelatin and hands like flame spurted out of a blowtorch.

A. HYATT MAYOR

A MONUMENT TO ST. AUGUSTINE

ESSAYS OF SOME ASPECTS OF HIS THOUGHT. *Written in Commemoration of his 15th Centenary. New York, Lincoln MacVeagh: The Dial Press. $5.00.*

In the words of the preface, this Monument "is dedicated to the more general aspects of St. Augustine's thought: to St. Augustine the Philosopher, the Sociologist, and the Man of Letters, not to St. Augustine the Doctor of Grace and the Ecclesiologist. . . . . It attempts to evaluate the general influence which St. Augustine has had in Western thought and culture and his meaning for us at the present day."

The writers of the essays have made contributions of varying degrees of excellence to achieve the purpose expressed in the preface. But whether they have succeeded in giving their readers an accurate account of "the Thought" or not, is a question which each reader must decide for himself. Thought is a very elusive entity, when you would measure it by its aspects. There is nearly always a danger, that a doctrine, divorced from its psychological and historical context, may be little better than a caricature, or scarcely less than a libel. Most of the controversies about, and the perversions of, the meaning of St. Augustine have arisen from an indifference to the synthetic, the historical and the chronological methods of approach to his various works. He was compelled by the controversies of his time to develop his opinions, to qualify, even to contradict, his opinions. It is very easy to analyze the formative factors of his intellectual character into Manichaeism and Plotinian Platonism; or to take Arianism, Donatism and Pelagianism, as the occasional causes of his metaphysical speculations on personality, human freedom and divine grace. Such analyses will give us aspects. But are the aspects faithful to the Thinker and his Thought? To understand a thinker like St. Augustine, it is necessary to envisage his thought in the localized circumstances of his thinking. The present work leaves upon us the impression that St. Augustine's thought is as impersonal as the thought of St. Thomas, or of Herbert Spencer, or of Bergson.

Of no great thinker is this so untrue as it is of St. Augustine. His metaphysics and his philosophy, except in his "City of God," are almost autopsychographical, an apologia pro vita sua. To systematize him is to depersonalize him; and that is to destroy him. To compare him to, or to contrast him with, other thinkers in their systems, is analogous to reading a fine biography according to the formulas of biology.

His philosophy is the expression of his gradual reconciliation in his intellectual character of factors, that had elements of contradiction. In his approach to Christianity, and for some years after his conversion to Christianity, his intellectual effort was to ADAPT his Neo-Platonism and his Manichaeism to his faith. Besides *adapting* he had to ADOPT the new principles of Christian religion. How this assimilative process, through absorption, selection, rejection, was made, and resulted in an intellectual reconciliation of Reason and Faith, it was the purpose of his writings to show. This work of reconciliation of Faith and Reason was, by no means, uninterruptedly progressive: it never, or rarely ever, is in the energetic intellectual life of any man, who lives by principles that are supra-rational. He admits contradictions in his writings. In his "De Dono Perseverantiae," Cap. 55, he says, "I would wish that no one would so embrace all my views as to follow me, except in those things, in which he should see me not to have erred. . . . Even I myself have not in all things followed myself." He wishes to be read with critical frankness. In his treatise on the Trinity (Lib. III, Proem. 2), he writes, "I would like the reader of my works, not only to be willing to agree, but also to be free to disagree." But he wants the final verdict to rest on his later, and not on his earlier, works. (De Predestinatione Sanctorum, Cap. 8, IV.) Now all this enables us to realize how tentative St. Augustine is in his statements. It would be well to remember that, in quoting him on any particular point, he may be only an earnest mind seeking to make clear his own attitude towards a matter, on which he had, at the time he wrote on that matter, no settled conviction. It is easy, but very unjustifiable, to translate the developing mind of an investigator, like St. Augustine, from his final work to his earlier; still more unjustifiable to attribute to him the clear cut, definite consciousness of later ages on matters, philosophical and theological.

To the modern mind, the matters of most interest in the philosophy of St. Augustine are the history, and the method, of his reconciling Reason and Faith. They are interesting, because they are so real, so individual and so personal to him, as they are to each of us. It is a purely academic question, in what the philosophy of religion consists, a question that will be debated in books and in lecture-rooms, as long as academicians love debating. But in the world outside the world of mere speculation, men are striving to evaluate the fulness of human experience; and philosophy and religion have met and kissed. Men will turn to a great genius, like St. Augustine, because philosophic ideas were, for him, not the speculations of the study, but, as one of the Essayists of this Monument says: "they were the expressions of his own vivid, unquestionable, personal experience" (p. 347). Our own experience was his. And his value to us is, that he is accurately descriptive of an experience, which we have; and that he is safely directive towards a goal, which we need.

"We ought to recognize in Augustine's experience of his conversion and Christian practice," says Mons. Maurice Blondel, "a science of universal character, an explanation valuable and communicable everywhere and at all times, a unity capable of explaining all the springs of thought, the whole dynamism of the spiritual life, every incident in the drama that is being played for all eternity in the depths of the individual conscience, as in the whole history of the human race and the world" (p. 347). His experience is moral, spiritual and intellectual. In each of these realms we can, each of us individually, meet him on personal ground. His descriptions are personal and experimental. It is because the experiences were so real to him, that the explanations are so valid to us.

His experience proved to him that materialistic Hedonism can never adequately satisfy the deep, strong needs of man. The paradox for him, as for all of us, is that the natural desire for happiness cannot be satisfied in nature: our nature tends to something higher and greater than itself. Is there a moral obligation to seek anything greater and higher than ourselves? His masters, Plato and Plotinus admit that the Supreme Good is Supremely desirable; and that it is folly to be distracted from its pursuit, its possession, or its enjoyment by sensible distractions. But what is the moral obligation to pursue this higher Good? Belief in divine laws and sanctions is found in Greek literature; the soul of the people is mirrored in the religion of their myths, which Plato utilized through lack of dialectical arguments. But before the problem of moral responsibility, Greek philosophy never got beyond identifying morality with justice, with the natural and positive law. At times it distinguished the one from the other. It never effectively succeeded in establishing duty as an imperative of the inner conscience. It is here where St. Augustine is triumphantly superior to his Greek Masters. And it is here where he is most helpful to the earnest modern, who is distracted by the clash of ethical systems before the moral problem of personal obligation.

On the spiritual ground he shows us his approach to, and so far as human language can do so, his possession and enjoyment of, the Supreme Good. With St. Augustine mysticism is an experience, a life and a philosophy. His mystical union with God was the preoccupation of his later life and of his thought. In his Confessions, VII,17, he describes what St. Bonaventure would call, "The Soul's Itinerary to God," from the finite, through the sensible and the intellectual, to the Infinite, "That Unchangeable, Which, unless the mind had in some way known, it had no sure ground to prefer It to the changeable. And thus with the flash of one trembling glance it arrived at That which Is. And then I saw Thy invisible things understood by the things which are made. But I could not fix my gaze thereon, and my infirmity being struck back, I was thrown again on my wonted habits, carrying along with me only a loving memory thereof, and a longing for what I had, as it were, perceived the odour of, but was not yet able to feed on." Mr. Watkins has a very informative essay in this volume on "The Mysticism of St. Augustine." But like most of the articles in the volume, excellent in many respects, it leaves an unsatisfactory impression. Is this description of an experience purely Christian? or the expression of St. Augustine's habit of intellectual preoccupation with the Universal, which habit he had acquired from the Neo-Platonists? He had a nostalgia of the Infinite. Was that an acquired habit, that became his by contact with Greek speculation, that turned away from the changeable to rivet its vision on the Unchangeable? Or was it an infused gift, a divine grace of passive union? That is a question that, maybe, only theology can answer.

But as St. Augustine is presented in this volume as a philosopher, the pre-disposing, intellectual, natural causes of his mysticism, logically suggest themselves to the reader's mind. Controversy is not the purpose of this notice. Accordingly, it is in no controversial spirit, that we call attention to the fact that, Mysticism, as an experience is transcendental. A pure philosophic mysticism will lead us to a knowledge of the Absolute. But it will never give us, as a possession, anything more than a sublimation of the Relative.

It is in his magnificent manner of showing us, that intellect alone is insufficient, as a guide to the realization of our real end, that St. Augustine is the directive Master-mind of Christian Philosophy. It is in this rôle, that he is a metaphysician of reality. Metaphysics has a nobler function than the construction of a plan of consistency among abstractions in the ideal world: it must embrace the concrete character of man in the fulness of experience. Metaphysics needs the dynamic vitality of contact with life. Mons. Etienne Gilson tells us that: "Augustinianism would gain in precision, in discipline, and enrichment of every kind by contact with Thomism" (p. 314). But he does not tell us how the contact is to be made; or with what specific form of Thomism the contact has to be established. Is it with Dominican Thomism? Or with Suarezian Thomism of the Jesuits? We are not so confident that such contact with either, or with both these estimable schools would make Augustinianism creative and assimilative. We respectfully submit, that the future of Augustinian metaphysics lies in the revival of the interest of intelligent men reading St. Augustine for themselves, and in realizing that our problems, moral, spiritual, intellectual, were the problems of his day; and that his solutions can, with a little care, fit our modern needs.

Fr. Peter Daniel Hughes

THE SYMBOLIST INFLUENCE

L'INFLUENCE DU SYMBOLISME FRANÇAIS SUR LA POÉSIE AMÉRICAINE (DE 1910 À 1920) *par René Taupin, Docteur ès Lettres. Bibliothèque de la Revue de Littérature Comparée, Dirigée par MM. F. Baldensperger et P. Hazard. Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion. Paris.* 1929.

Mr. Taupin's study is of very great value, not only as an account of the French influence on the period of American poetry which he considers, but as a history of that period; as a history, the work is necessarily incomplete, but it is more complete and of greater value in general than Mr. Glenn Hughes's excellent history of the Imagist movement recently published in English.[1] Mr. Taupin, however, is seriously handicapped in several ways, the first of them being in a lack of critical perception. On page 10 he states flatly that the only true poets produced in America during the nineteenth century were Whitman and Poe, and he seems to imply pretty strongly that they were the only literary artists. And if we are to accept literally what he has written on page 108, he believes that poetry was dead in England at the inception of the Imagist movement; and if we are to accept literally the first sentence on page 211, he believes that poetry was dead in English at the inception of the movement. He apparently would brush aside as negligible all or most of the following writers: Emily Dickinson, Emerson, Hardy, Bridges, Robinson, and Frost, and perhaps Yeats, T. S. Moore, Hawthorne, Melville, Stephen Crane, and Henry James.[2] This is no indictment whatever of these writers; it is a very serious indictment of Mr. Taupin's judgment. French criticism of American letters and perhaps of English letters as well would seem to be, not only in the case of Mr. Taupin, but in general, at least a quarter of a century behind the times and perhaps more, to exhibit, in short, that same provincialism which Mr. Taupin deplores in the American literature of the eighties and nineties. Similarly, Mr. Taupin finds the verse of Mr. Pound, H. D., and Miss Moore, unmusical as compared to that of Swinburne, a fact which tends to discredit many of his judgments from the very outset. The most revealing of his blunders of this kind is a footnote on page 136, referring to Mr. Pound: "Il savait brillamant parler la langue traditionelle:

---

[1] *Imagism and The Imagists*, by Glenn Hughes. Stanford University Press.

[2] It is true that he speaks of several of these writers with a certain mild respect at times; but the total effect of all his references, specific and general, is about what I have stated.

> I am aweary with the utter and beautiful weariness
> And with the ultimate wisdom and with things terrene,
> I am aweary with your smiles and your laughter,
> And the sun and the winds again
> Reclaim their booty and the heart of me."

But the passage is neither brilliantly executed nor in the least traditional; it is absurdly incompetent apprentice work; it is fortunately not a fair example of Mr. Pound's early writing.

There are certain extremely elusive difficulties that inhere in any such study as this, of which Mr. Taupin seems to be only indifferently aware. What, for example, is an influence, and how do we identify it? When, as in Mr. Taupin's admirable chapters on Mr. Pound, Mr. Eliot, Mr. Fletcher, and Miss Lowell, we find instance after instance of translation, along with the public avowal of influence in critical writings, one can scarcely remain sceptical. But sometimes there appears to be an influence where there is none. Mr. Jules Romains has answered in detail the critics of his early work who traced that work to Whitman; the work has certain general resemblances to Whitman; yet so far as I know there is not the slightest reason to doubt the honesty and accuracy of Mr. Romains's history of his early poems. It appears to be fairly evident that Poe influenced Baudelaire far less than he was once supposed to have influenced him. Emerson's *Mithridates* and Rimbaud's *Fêtes de la Faim* have the same theme, many images in common, and much similarity in respect to meter and general structure, yet I suspect it might be hard to prove an influence either way. Emerson, long before Mr. Valéry, began exploiting the more or less mathematical concept of the universe, which has provided Mr. Valéry with so many brilliant images, especially in *Le Cimetière Marin.* Yet considering Mr. Valéry's personal history, one would feel it absurd to suppose that Emerson had influenced Mr. Valéry on that score. Emerson, like the Symbolists, and before them, was experimenting very skillfully and quite deliberately with the great classical line of his tradition (the early or mid-Shakespearian), and endeavoring to reconcile it with certain very personal inventions of his own (see *Days* and *Blight*, for example); like the later Symbolists, he was working with a species of rhymed free verse. I have seen several writers within the last year or so stating that Gerard Hopkins is an important influence in the career of Hart Crane; yet Mr. Crane read Hopkins for the first time somewhere near Christmas 1927, borrowing my copy to do so, and expressing upon returning it the utmost surprise at the nature and extent of Hopkins's stylistic experiments: at that time, Mr. Crane's first book had long been published, and nearly all of The Bridge had been written, including Atlantis, The Dance, Cutty Sark, and The River. Mr. Crane had quite likely seen quotations from Hopkins here and there, but he gave me to understand that he had never read the book; and to be influenced by Hopkins (not by a misconception of him) one would have to read all of him, poems and notes, with considerable care. And if Hopkins ever did influence Mr. Crane, the strange thing about the affair is that Mr. Crane nowhere shows a trace of the influence: his meter starts from a strictly iambic movement (Marlowe, and Jonson) and his syntactic disintegration is genuine and corresponds to a disintegration of logic, whereas the apparent syntactic disintegration in Hopkins is the result of a personal system of syntax rigidly adhered to, and nearly every poem rests on a solid logical structure; their philosophies, since Mr. Crane is a mystic of the school of Blake and Whitman, and since Hopkins was a Jesuit priest and despite his tinge of Scotism, are radically different and result in radically different poetic tempers. The metric of Hopkins, on the other hand, does bear a curious resemblance to the systems of Dr. Williams and Miss Moore, but these two poets had formed their systems before Hopkins was published.

To the errors in the preceding paragraph Mr. Taupin nowhere commits himself, but he commits himself to comparable errors. Of Miss Moore he writes: "Il est très probable que Marianne Moore n'avait lu ni Laforgue ni Rimbaud quand en 1915 elle publia ses premiers poèmes, bien que beaucoup aient cru y voir l'influence de ces deux symbolistes; mais c'est encore la langue symboliste que parle sa poésie, et un idiome qui n'est pas éloigné de celui de ces poètes ni même de celui de Mallarmé." Mr. Taupin then quotes in a footnote from a personal letter written by Miss Moore a passage stating that she had not read Laforgue or Rimbaud when she was writing certain verses. This subject forces one into the field of personal letters and reminiscences; Mr. Taupin makes use of them, and I have done so once; I shall have to do so again. From about 1921 until sometime after she became editor of the *Dial*, Miss Moore had the patience and the good nature to correspond with me rather regularly. As late as 1923 she expressed to me her ignorance of Laforgue, and a very slight knowledge of Rimbaud and Mallarmé, along with the most active distaste for Apollinaire and for certain American Laforguians (of whom Mr. Eliot was not one). If it is a matter merely of offering personal convictions, and that is all Mr. Taupin has done for Miss Moore, my own conviction is that Laforgue's moral attitude is one profoundly unsympathetic to Miss Moore, and that his style is almost as remote from hers as possible, despite her frequent use of a kind of structure, which I have elsewhere called the double mood, found commonly in Laforgue's work. What then is the proper classification of her work? It would be easy to say that she is Yankee, a spiritual descendant of the New England tradition, whose moral sense has all too frequently become a sense of etiquette, but can we show precisely what we mean by this? One might find a very crude antecedent in the humorous verse of Holmes and Lowell, a body of verse that may have served as some kind of background for a few brilliant poems by that disciple of Blake and the Symbolists, Mr. S. Foster Damon, notably for his poem *A Family Portrait*. The sharp observation, especially of small things, animals and the like, possessing at the same moment an aura of magnificence and elusive implications of irony, is like nothing whatever in Symbolist literature and is very like Emily Dickinson. Her gift for epigrammatic moralizing recalls Miss Dickinson, Emerson, and Mr. Robinson — the great Yankee tradition, in short. Yet about 1923 Miss Moore wrote me asking the source of a stanza from Mr. Robinson's poem *The Poor Relation*, a stanza which I had quoted without giving the author's name: she did not know Mr. Robinson well enough to recognize one of the most striking passages from his best-known book, *The Man Against the Sky*. She had previously expressed to me her "respect" for Mr. Robinson, but had expressed no great enthusiasm before the discovery of that stanza. Now Miss Moore is widely read and an excellent linguist: facts of this sort merely force one to recognize that one cannot always trust to a genuinely lettered poet's having read the things that he obviously must have read. The two modern poets for whom Miss Moore expressed to me, and has, I believe, expressed publicly, the most profound admiration, are Hardy and Yeats. It will take a subtle scholar to find their influence in her work. In one of her early poems (*Fear Is Hope*) she quotes Skelton, a fact which might give us a hint; but if we pay too much attention to Miss Moore's quotations we may find the telephone book as an influence. Nevertheless, her earliest lyrics, which contain the germ, apparently, of her later manner, things like *To an Intra-Mural Rat*, show a strong resemblance to many early Elizabethan epigrams, such as Turberville's *Advice to the Reader* (I thee advise If thou be wise To keep thy wit Though it be small. 'Tis hard to get And far to fet — 'Twas ever yet Dear'st ware of all) or Queen Elizabeth's epigram on the Transubstantiation (Christ was the Word that spake it He took the bread and brake it And what that Word did make it So I accept and take it). The number of such poems is large (one can add to them a few earlier pieces of similar tone, such as the different versions of *Earth upon Earth*, and a little of Skelton); they belong to a body of literature that everyone studies; Miss Moore probably encountered them early. But then what becomes of the Yankee hypothesis? And what of Laforgue? And a few years ago, I had still another disconcerting experience. I happened to encounter a very young writer, Miss Rowena Lockett, who later appeared in a small magazine of which I was an editor, Miss Lockett being at the time about nineteen years old. I was immediately struck, not only by a very feminine fastidiousness in Miss Lockett's work, but also by a strong resemblance to Miss Moore and Miss Dickinson. Yet Miss Lockett at that time had never read the latter and never heard of the former; nor had she ever heard of the French Symbolists. She became familiar with them, and with the Elizabethan epigrammatists, only after her style was formed. If Miss Lockett could write like Miss

Moore without having heard of her, Miss Moore could have written like the Elizabethans without having heard of them.

Similarly, toward the end of his book, Mr. Taupin quotes a passage from *The Marriage of Faustus and Helen Part II*, by Hart Crane, and finds in it the style of Rimbaud. Mr. Crane, as Mr. Taupin remarks, does not read French, but he numbers among his friends such men as Allen Tate and Malcolm Cowley, who know Symbolist poetry very well, and he has studied all the available translations. He has the greatest of admiration for Rimbaud, as far as he knows him, and has beyond a doubt tried to learn from him. But how much *can* he learn from him? There have been some very good translations from Rimbaud's prose and a few very bad translations from his verse. The vocabulary of some of Mr. Crane's work suggests somewhat the vocabulary of Rimbaud's prose and of a very little of his verse, in its quality of intellectual violence, of almost perverse energy; but this quality is more Mallarméan than Rimbaldian (most of Rimbaud's lyrics, even when they are presenting a state of hallucination, or what seems such, present it in a style as limpid as the style of Shakespeare's songs or of Blake's), and the quality is not primarily Mallarméan. Mr. Taupin refers to this fragment under its original title (*The Springs of Guilty Song*), as it appeared first in Broom, without Parts I and III, with which it was published later in Secession and finally in Mr. Crane's volume, White Buildings. Now, if the style of Part II recalls either Rimbaud or Mallarmé, it recalls much more strongly the style of Parts I and III; which, in turn, recalls very strongly indeed the style of the passage from Jonson (whose name, incidentally, Mr. Taupin spells with an *h* every time he uses it, whatever lack of familiarity with English poetry that may indicate) which Mr. Crane sets at the head of his poem. The passage comes from The Alchemist and is one of the numerous passages in that play in which the central figures make nonsense speeches purporting to contain deep alchemical secrets or to express a feignedly distraught state of mind — this particular passage serves both functions at once. The nonsense is necessary to Jonson's plot; the reader recognizes the necessity and can make no objection; and the reader is forced to accept with unalloyed pleasure whatever elusive but apparently genuine poetic implications there may be in such passages, since he receives these implications absolutely gratis. Jonson would seem, then, to have been wholly aware of the theory of the "poem writing itself," a theory formulated critically by Mallarmé (though not for the first time), and usually regarded as a Mallarméan or neo-Mallarméan innovation. Jonson knew how to control the method satisfactorily when writing in his own name and how to let it run wild in the name of his cozeners. The not quite to be isolated poetic implications in these passages are of great beauty and are very frequent; it is the "oblique method" (Mr. Tate's phrase) of modern poetry in absolutely perfect form. Where, then, did Mr. Crane get the method? And the perhaps Rimbaldian, but certainly somewhat Jonsonian, diction? If my reader is sceptical about the definite consciousness of so irresponsible a method existing among mere Englishmen, let me quote the following passage from Samuel Johnson on Dryden: "Dryden delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness mingle. . . . This inclination sometimes produced nonsense, which he knew; and sometimes it issued in absurdities, of which perhaps he was not conscious." To illustrate the point, Johnson quotes the following stanza from *Annus Mirabilis:*

> Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,
>   And see the ocean leaning on the sky;
> From thence our rolling neighbors we shall know,
>   And on the lunar world securely pry.

This might almost pass for an imitation of *Bâteau Ivre*. It seems almost certain that Chapman employed the same kind of semi-obscurantism, and rather systematically, perhaps at the instigation of that "affable familiar ghost" (who nightly gulled him with intelligence), of whom he seems to have written so much. Chapman, too, of course, is a man of genius. The reader curious of esoteric theory might consider also Emerson's *Merlin*, the ten lines beginning "He shall not his brain encumber." The words with which Emerson introduces this versified definition, seem, at times, to have been prophetic.

But the matter of influence, with which these remarks began, is not so easily settled. If this method was known to English poets in the past, it was rarely used by them openly; to find it so used one will have, after leaving a few names in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to come down to Poe and Emily Dickinson, in whom at times it seems fairly obvious, and to the Symbolists and those who have written later. Recent examples come to mind by the dozen. Shall we assume that the increase in the popularity of the method is due to Rimbaud? His hallucination was probably in part, at least, of another sort, but he might have moved his admirers to study hallucination of this sort as the only sort available to them. Few of his supposed followers, certainly, get very near the actual quality of his style. Or shall we lay it to Mallarmé? He used the method, but with greater circumspection than Mr. Crane or Mr. Joyce. His logic can almost always be discovered; what seems an evasion of logic into pure obliquity, often turns out to be mere periphrasis. But a careless reading of his work, especially by foreigners, might make him seem about as strange as a poet could be. Are these men the causes of the movement, then, or are they merely exemplars of it, of a tendency, rather widespread, to an increasingly great preoccupation with the fringe of consciousness, to an increasing emphasis on the concept of continuous experience, to identify, under the influence perhaps of scientific or romantic monism, subconscious stimuli and reactions with occult inspiration, and to employ in writing from such attitudes as these interests provide a language previously reserved to the religious mystics? Such a movement would involve along its course such indefinable philosophies as Bergsonism, such semi-metaphorical sciences as psycho-analysis, and more especially the popular myths and superstitions which they and physical science and biological science have engendered.[3] Our poets, then, whether they are to be classed as effective causes or as mere effects, or as both, of the movement (and Mallarmé and Rimbaud certainly have a considerable causative influence, at the same time that they are probably not the entire causative influence, and in spite of the fact that they both — unlike many of their disciples — held the method under fairly adequate control[4]), our poets, then, are they not writing a little too much as Jonson's alchemists spoke, with a philosophical background insusceptible of definition, but as their own dupes, not to dupe others? Mr. Crane, despite his remarkable genius, and one could say as much of Mr. Joyce as he appears in his latest work, seems to answer Jonson's scoundrels across the centuries in their own language, but like a somnambulist under their control. Is it certain that this trust in the semi-automatic responses of the edge of consciousness results in increased awareness? Or is it merely a dilution of awareness that appears strange because of its very thinness? Man would seem to be man in so far as he is not automatic or seems not to be; the ideal organic automaton is not the poet, but the parrot. Can this method be profitably extended farther than Donne and Jonson were willing to extend it without more being lost than is gained? I doubt the possibility profoundly. And finally can we blame this extension entirely on the French? It would seem to be almost inevitably the result of an era of intellectual uncertainty and charlatanism — inevitably, that is, for a certain percentage of the poets, not for all. We can hardly blame it on the French, though they first practiced the method extensively, despite Mr. Taupin's conviction that we not only can but that it is one of their chief claims to glory. For Mr. Taupin assumes that all of Mr. Pound's favorite Symbolists exert a good influence when they exert any influence, and that everything good in American poetry must be the result of French influence. He writes of Mr. Stevens: "La précision stricte des mots et des vers de Rimbaud et des parnassiens français est encore bien adaptée au vers blanc anglais." Shades of Jonson and Milton! He makes this comment, indeed, in connection with a poem with a mildly French subject, but he says nothing of the subject — he is speaking of stylistic qualities. He writes elsewhere: "Grâce à la psychologie moderne, on savait que le symbole, s'il était total, était l'expression la plus directe qui fût." Poets have "known" a great many other strange things in the last thirty years on the same authority. Grâce à la psychologie moderne indeed![5]

---

[3] See *Flux and Blur in Contemporary Art*, by John Crowe Ransom. Sewanee Review. July 1929.

[4] Since Rimbaud did not explain his abdication, one hypothesis is as good as another. Did he perhaps see the necessary conclusion of his method, realized by a few of our contemporaries?

---

[5] Direct expression of what? The most direct expression of anything is itself; if a poem can be a more or less direct expression, then, it is an expression of something other than itself, a kind of shorthand. But poetry, though it communicates experience indirectly and incidentally, is, in so far as it is good poetry, a new kind of ex-

This brings us to the last serious objection to Mr. Taupin's treatise, which, indeed, I have already mentioned in passing, his failure to classify and evaluate influences, his basic assumption that American poetry untouched by French influence is bad or negligible and that all of the influences imported by Mr. Pound and Mr. Eliot from France are about equally good. I have said in this essay and elsewhere what I believe to be the dangers of what passes for Rimbaldianism or Mallarméism; I have spoken elsewhere of Laforguianism. When Mr. Taupin makes near the end of his book his already famous remark that American poetry to-day is speaking French, one is moved to wonder — not what Mr. Taupin means, for by this time one is willing to admit the possibility of his meaning almost anything — but what the statement might mean. Mr. Taupin in writing of Mr. Pound admits that Mr. Pound in employing the modern French as models after leaving his earlier models did not change principles but merely changed examples. The order of examples ought then to be reversible. In general, a young writer learns the principles of good writing most easily from someone fairly near him in time, who has wrestled with something like his own materials. For a few Americans in Mr. Pound's generation and the next, the Symbolists were the best poets near them in time except for a few English and American poets too mature spiritually, too profoundly a part and masters of the English tradition or of certain aspects of it to be comprehensible to poets at a certain stage of immaturity. Many modern Americans discovered that the Elizabethans might serve as models through Mr. Eliot's attempt to fuse them with Laforgue, or through the attempt of Mr. Stevens to fuse in such a poem as *Le Monocle de Mon Oncle* certain French traits and certain late sixteenth-century traits. No poet speaks another poet's language unless he is a weak poet or the influence is a weakening influence. I believe that the Laforguian influence and the so-called Rimbaldian-Mallarméan influence are subversive, and they are the only radical departures from poetic tradition in the Symbolist Movement. To that extent Mr. Taupin may be right, especially where the more easily isolated Laforguian

---

perience, an expression merely of itself, and such a statement as this becomes nonsense. A correspondent of mine, Mr. J. V. Cunningham, once accused me, unjustly, I believe, of this error.

influence is concerned. Even so remarkable a genius as Mr. Stevens was bullied out of a share of his seriousness by the Laforguian temper of one section of his generation. Mr. Taupin has shown that French free verse influenced the beginnings of Imagist free verse, but seems unaware of the profound differences existing between the two finished products; this, however, is so difficult a subject that I shall have to reserve it for separate treatment.

One of the minor flaws in Mr. Taupin's book is his habit of providing elaborate explanations of some of the more irresponsible and inane utterances of the early Imagist movement, utterances that can be shown to mean anything and that probably meant nothing. He writes, for example, with the utmost gravity: "Ford Madox Hueffer, dans son livre: *Thus to Revisit*, nous renseigne précisément sur ce point. Il parle des trois groupes voisins qui s'appelaient: imagistes, symbolistes et vorticistes: 'Au fond il me semble que le point essentiel de leur sympathie et de leur contact est leur désir de faire sentir au monde leurs propres images, ou bien, disons que le premier point de leur doctrine est que l'artiste doit exprimer par son art sa propre personnalité' et il poursuit ainsi en rapportant une conversation qu'il eut avec Pound et au cours de laquelle celui-ci lui avait dit: 'Ce que le public veut, c'est MOI . . . parce que je ne suis pas un imbécile, comme les membres qui composent le public!'" Then follows a chapter of elaboration. This sort of thing should either be left to accumulate the dust it merits or else it should be given its proper rhythmic setting, a place, say, near the end of the 22nd Canto (Those ain't buttons, them's bobbles).

Mr. Taupin's book is large, and contains a great deal of valuable research to which I have referred only in passing. I have emphasized its weaknesses because they are common to other critics and are likely to be common in the criticism of this particular field within the next few years unless due precautions are taken. The painstaking arrangement of parallel passages in the chapters on Eliot, Pound, Fletcher, and Amy Lowell is extremely enlightening, and very few of the parallels are unconvincing. I myself am especially grateful for the praise that Mr. Taupin gives Dr. Williams, a writer who has seemed to me for ten years or so one of the principal geniuses of our time, and whose work has been stupidly neglected and ridiculed. And yet Mr. Taupin's critical faculties are inadequate to his task; his knowledge of English poetry appears superficial. Were it not for these deficiencies he might have written a final and authoritative work; as it is, he has merely provided a great deal of invaluable material for one.

YVOR WINTERS

POST-SYMBOLISM

AXEL'S CASTLE: A STUDY IN THE IMAGINATIVE LITERATURE OF 1870–1930. *By Edmund Wilson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1931. $2.50.

This as the title implies is not the chronological and miscellaneous history of a period. It is a study of six contemporary writers — Yeats, Valéry, Proust, Joyce, Eliot, and Gertrude Stein — who carry into our own age the methods and aims of Symbolism. Though they have all been affected by the technical discoveries of the Symbolists, each has made valuable discoveries of his own: But it is less with this aspect of "Axel's Castle" than with its underlying thesis that this review is chiefly concerned.

Mr. Wilson is the first American critic to formulate a comprehensive philosophy of French Symbolism as it has affected writers in English. He is the first to discriminate between the aims of Symbolism and the previous, more popular Romanticism of which it is the successor. Symbolism was Romanticism, but it was a second and distinctive wave of it, more self-conscious and more philosophical in its emphasis on aesthetic form. Both socially and morally, as an uncompromising development of Romanticism, it rejected, notably in the career of Rimbaud, the entire nineteenth-century world of mechanistic thought and of bourgeois industrialism. It fled from the corresponding inner world, where one saw reflected the perfectly mechanical nature whose power, increasing steadily since the seventeenth century, was more and more stifling the traditional view of man as a spontaneous communicant in a free and miraculous nature. Symbolism grew into a complete hostility to a vicious industrial society to which it would grant no quarter.

It met the enemy in two characteristic ways which are finally identical. Either its attempt to return through the barrier of science to nature was direct, as in the case of Rimbaud who gave up poetry for action, or it withdrew to a world of illusion, away from both nature and man, like the hero of Villiers de l'Isle Adam's novel

"Axel." Rimbaud tried to find in Africa a simple order of life radically different from the occidental materialism of Europe: Axel shut himself up in a castle in the Black Forest, creating through revery and illusion the anti-type of his age. While Mr. Wilson describes at length what one may call Rimbaud's program of action, he has written exclusively about authors who have followed Axel's program of retreat. The book is largely a brilliant history of the increasing cross-purposes of the artist and his industrialized society, of the withdrawal of the critical intelligence (which is likewise the poetic intelligence) from a world that stifles it, and of the peculiar crisis that the relation of the artist and society has reached to-day.

Mr. Wilson takes his general point of view regarding the philosophical meaning of Symbolism from that chapter of Whitehead's "Science and the Modern World" in which English Romanticism is described as a revolt from the accumulated force of seventeenth-century mechanism: the Romantic poets were trying to restore the true poetic vision of nature as a vast organism, of which man is a part, and in which the attitude of reverence and sensuous appreciation should replace the pragmatic categories of science. There is truth in this, but so stated and so apprehended it is a half-truth, and I think that Mr. Wilson has read Whitehead too literally. It is one thing for Professor Whitehead to capture for his doctrine of "organic mechanism" an exclusive right to the poetic insight; but it is quite another thing to suppose that poetry may be isolated into pure sensation in which the power of abstraction, of which science is only one phase, is dead. Mr. Wilson, I believe, has mistaken some illustrative matter in Whitehead for a philosophy of poetry, which does not serve him very far. For example, in his interpretation of Valéry, he does not make use of any comprehensive idea of poetry, and he thus mistakes a universal attribute of the art for the special feature of one poet. Of Valéry he says:

> Valéry's poetry is then always shifting back and forth between this palpable and visible world and a realm of intellectual abstraction . . . between the absolute laws of the mind and the limiting contingencies of life. . . . Rather an unpromising subject, one might suppose — one at any rate entirely remote from the emotions of Romantic poetry. Yet this queer antagonism has inspired Valéry.

Do the absolute laws of the mind proceed, do they ever operate — in spite of Valéry's self-dramatizing charlatanism — autonomously, as Pure Intellect, innocent of all contingency? They do not, even in pure mathematics. The formula that Mr. Wilson gets out of Valéry's poetry is not, perhaps, so unpromising as he may think. It is a quite normal one. For it is the general procedure not merely of poetry but of all the arts, to take some intellectual construction, some fixed version of nature or experience, whether physics in Lucretius or the Bible in Milton, and to plunge it into the realm of contingency, where it may or may not survive. At this point, I believe, it becomes obvious in what respect Mr. Wilson applies his Whitehead too literally. We are led to believe that the Symbolists could rid themselves of all science and envisage Pure Organism in nature — which as poetry would be sheer blur and utterly inarticulate.

But the Symbolists, no less than Lucretius and Milton, were faced with a systematic world scheme. Philosophically the difference between a Milton and a Rimbaud is the difference between classicism and romanticism: Milton's material was sympathetic to him and he was able to present it objectively and systematically, so that the contingent element is hidden and secondary; while, on the other hand, Rimbaud's world-scheme is hostile, yet it is none the less completely present, though he tests it in the realm of contingency incompletely, fragmentarily, so that it disintegrates. There is here, no less than in Valéry, with a difference only of emphasis, that "queer antagonism" of intellect and sensibility, of scientific mechanism and contingent sensation.

Mr. Wilson's failure to see the meaning of Valéry's conflict is implicit in the view that he expresses as follows, which is a program for the coming generation:

> And who can say that, as science and art look more and more deeply into experience and achieve a wider and wider range, as they come to apply themselves more and more directly to human life, they may not arrive at a way of thinking, a technique of dealing with our perceptions, which will make *art and science one.* (Italics mine.)

Shades of Valéry's delusions of grandeur! Either Mr. Wilson is wrong or I am wrong; it is as categorical as that; or perhaps, though being of the same generation in time, we are of such remote spiritual generations that we shall seem very obscure to each other. At any rate, the passage above is to me nearly meaningless. It is a logical solecism to speak of science as looking *deeply* into experience; it may achieve a *wider range* in extending the common denominator among phenomena taken in their strictly measurable aspect; but there is no depth to this. Have we any reason to expect poetry to deal more directly and more expertly with experience than Shakespeare? Only, Mr. Wilson seems to tell us, when art and science are one; but why suppose that science, rather than a better income, or a trip to Europe, is what poetry needs? This is not philosophical. In spite of his usual scepticism, he has given in to a curious brand of credulity which lets him reject the narrow contemporary range of Eliot for a more comprehensive art which does not exist, which he cannot philosophize about, which he cannot even sensuously describe. The union of art and science on these terms is a chimera; it is one of those typically modern compromises in which each side concedes itself away to extinction.

This compromise is at the heart of Mr. Wilson's rejection of the living Symbolists. There is, on the one hand, the extreme romanticism of the Symbolist grasp of Pure Whiteheadian Organism: this is poetry. On the other hand, there is eighteenth-century physics, nineteenth-century biology, twentieth-century psychology: this is science. The futility of the Symbolists and our trouble in general are due to this: poetry and science are not on speaking terms. And this is where Whitehead has led the most versatile astray. He has led him to believe that a union of the poetic and the scientific impulses must take place, if at all, harmoniously, that being radically different they can meet only in compromise: Mr. Wilson does not wish to give up poetry, but he sees that science is triumphant; therefore let each yield a little to the other.

But poetry and science have always been "one," in a way that history, and the constitution of the mind (which we do not believe that M. Valéry has succeeded in changing), seem to teach us is alone possible. They have always been one because a poet takes the current body of beliefs, which whether as religion or as science pretend to a systematic infallibility, and submits them to the contingency of nature. Mr. Wilson repudiates his six writers because they are Poetry having no commerce with the scientific reality of their world. Here I think he fails to see that Joyce and Eliot have gone through every modern idea; as Romantics they have found these ideas intolerable and they have shown them disintegrating. What does Mr. Wilson require? Perhaps as a compromiser he desires his writers to be more hospitable to modern industrial civilization. Does he wish the poetic and critical intelligence, whose function is to test our leading beliefs, to abdicate to an uncritical religion of pseudo-science? I think he does; for he tells us that our Symbolists will no longer serve us, in the new order, as "guides." What are guides? Does he mean that we must be guided to a fuller appreciation of the present secular program? Or that our writers must transform themselves into propagandists?

That is his meaning so far as I can see it. He puts modern writers in a dilemma. Either they must follow Rimbaud's program of action or Axel's program of retreat; or they must face their time squarely by satirizing and reforming it or by "studying it scientifically." To satirize society is in a measure to reject it. Mr. Wilson's dilemma rests on the meaning of "studying it scientifically." If we are genuine scientists, and not pseudo-scientists purveying a jargon, we have not a word to say about values, nothing to recommend as a result of our studies, and we have not much more than Axel's participation in the control of affairs. This destroys Mr. Wilson's dilemma, unless he is willing to argue that H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, and Bernard Shaw are at once scientists and artists. Such writers are the only conceivable kind who fit Mr. Wilson's demand for an art-science, but to claim them for either art or science is to abuse the name of both. They are propagandists, responsible to the discipline of neither, for the secular order.

Mr. Wilson's sensitive and finely modulated prose style, the emotional subtlety of his insight into the sensibilities of his six writers, betrays a curious sympathy with them that his argument cannot cancel out. In spite of his belief that they are lost in an age that is all but history, in spite of his conviction that an age indifferent to their attitude is at hand, he is yet involved in that stage of the humane tradition which they stand for: he cannot predict coherently another kind of art than theirs. Writing about them he is precise, lucid, the master of his subject; as a prophet he is confused.

The essay on Proust is a masterly piece of critical exposition; Mr. Wilson could not set forth Proust's intentions so minutely, with such zeal and understanding, without sharing them. His hope for a chimerical new art, however, seems to me to be the deepest pessimism of our time. He does not like his age, and he cannot lose himself in the age of Yeats; so he has nothing to stand on. This is post-Symbolism with a vengeance.

ALLEN TATE

'TO KARTHAGE THEN I CAME . . .'

NEW FOUND LAND. *Fourteen Poems by Archibald MacLeish. Edition limited to* 500 *copies, printed by the Black Sun Press, Paris, for Houghton Mifflin Company.* 1930. $5.00.

POEMS (1926–1930). *By Robert Graves. London.* 1931. *Heinemann.* $1.25. (3/6).

ADAMASTOR. *By Roy Campbell. New York. The Dial Press.* 1931. $2.50.

TEN POEMS. *By Kathleen Tankersley Young. New York. Privately printed.* 1930. $2.25.

THE ECLIPTIC. *By Joseph Gordon Macleod. London. Faber & Faber.* 1930. $1.00. (2/6).

POEMS. *By W. H. Auden. London. Faber & Faber.* 1930. $1.00. (2/6).

CHELSEA ROOMING HOUSE. *By Horace Gregory. New York. Covici-Friede.* 1930. $2.00.

EPISTLE TO PROMETHEUS. *By Babette Deutsch. New York. Cape & Smith.* 1931. $2.00.

The order in which these titles are listed is not haphazard. I have tried to arrange them in what seems to me an order of descending merit. This arrangement is relative, not necessarily comparative. Books so different in conception, in manner, in purpose, can not be compared; all that can be estimated is the degree of success with which each accomplishes its aim, realizes itself. I believe, for instance, that Mr Graves' *Poems* is a better book than Miss Deutsch's *Epistle to Prometheus*, although the two books have nothing in common by which they may be judged, because Mr Graves seems to have understood clearly what he was about, and to have fulfilled his purpose completely, whereas Miss Deutsch has not. At any rate, this order is too jumbled for coherent discussion, and for the purposes of my review I shall divide them into two arbitrary groups, whose actual existence I should be the first to deny. The first group will include those poets whose medium is more or less conventional; the second group, those whose medium breaks with the conventional. It is a purely formal division, one which has nothing whatever to do with the intrinsic merit of the poems. And because the groups must be named somehow (and because 'reactionary' and 'revolutionary' are misleading terms, and 'traditional' and 'modernist' are silly), we may as well revert to school-days and call Group A 'Rome', and Group B 'Karthage'. Accordingly, for the purposes of this article the Messrs Graves, Campbell, Macleod, and Auden, are Romans; Miss Young and Miss Deutsch, Mr MacLeish and Mr Gregory, are Karthaginians.

I. ROME

Style is not an efficient, but a result. It is a mistake for the young artist to assume that he must acquire a 'good style' much as he would acquire a good typewriter. It is true that he must acquire a technic: but a technic is not a style, though it is often mistaken for one. Style is an air, a manner, consequent upon the best possible execution of an artistic *propositum*. It is not the starting-place, but the terminus.

I have suggested that technical virtuosity is often mistaken for style. This is as true for poetry as for any other of the arts. It is easy to applaud skillful devices, harder to estimate organic substances. Sometimes, indeed, there is nothing to estimate: the whole poem is its technical fabric, its shell. Sometimes there is nothing but substance (but this is rare): then the average reader complains that the poem is too 'difficult', too 'cerebral', too Whatever the current jargon suggests. (It is only fair to say that in this case the average reader is usually wrong: it is because of the popular relegation of poetry to a place among the Decorative Arts that an even very moderately intellectualized poem is almost invariably greeted with indifference, at best.) At any rate, much bad poetry is the fault of the writer's tendency to confuse mannerism and manner, and to suppose that he is enriching the latter when as a matter of fact he is merely exaggerating the former. Such a poem is the Nineteenth of Mr Auden's book, where the virtuosity is no less a virtuosity for its being one of verbal and rhythmic severity, and where the poet seems to be disguising a paucity of idea and intention in a garment of perverse obscurity:

> The silly fool, the silly fool
> Was sillier in school
> But beat the bully as a rule.
>
> The youngest son, the youngest son
> Was certainly no wise one
> Yet could surprise one.
>
> Or rather, or rather
> To be posh, we gather,
> One should have no father.
>
> Simple to prove
> That deeds indeed
> In life succeed
> But love in love
> And tales in tales
> Where no one fails.

Here is, unquestionably, considerable dexterity; yet I think I may be forgiven if I confess that I can find very little more than dexterity. Admitted that the verses 'mean' something: so great is the disproportion between the implications of the idea and its execution, that the impact is dispersed in the pyrotechnic clevernesses, and as a result, the poem is mannered; no style is attained. Mr Auden is not always guilty of this sort of thing; but before considering him further let me turn to the most prominent of the Romans, — Mr Robert Graves.

Possibly no contemporary writer of British prose has a more distinguished style than Robert Graves. His autobiography, *Good Bye to All That*, is a model of hard, pure, unaffected technic. It is as simple as good journalism, yet it manifests an artistry that is unknown to journalism. In this respect it is rather like the prose of Yeats' *Autobiographies and Reveries*, although Graves has none of the mellowness of Yeats. It is significant that the same qualities which make this prose so admirable a medium, animate the poems. It might almost be said that Graves has achieved a pure poetic style by the deliberate eradication of any 'style' whatsoever. When he is at his best (and the present volume is by far the best he has published as yet), his verse is unmannered, absolutely direct. Though the substance is often far from simple, the expression is almost never anything else. But this has not been easily accomplished. It is not long since Robert Graves came out of the Georgian twilight and ceased to be an Anthologist's Delight. Even now he has his troubles: they are not, to be sure, relapses into prettiness; rather, they are frantic flights to the opposite extreme. It is almost as if the poet felt impelled, from time to time, violently to expiate his sinful dallying-days. Consequently, he affects sometimes a subway-stridency, sometimes a gratuitous obscurity, sometimes (with depressing results) both at once. Not unnaturally: when Graves came out of Egypt, Mr E. E. Cummings was the smoke by day and Miss Stein the fire by night. It is Miss Stein, I think, to whom we are indebted for this chorale:

> His mother was a terrier bitch,
> His father a Dalmatian,
>   Guessing black or white:
> Not black because white
> Because black because white;
> Not white because black
> Because white because black,
>   Guessing black or white.
>
> His mother was from Renfrew,
> His father was a Zulu,
>   Guessing black or white:
> Not black because black
> Because white because white;
> Not white because white
> Because black because black,
>   Guessing black or white.

(I omit a prelude and concluding stanza, in which the same general idea is pursued.) But echoes of other poets are rare in this book. The influences have been genuinely assimilated, the mannerisms discarded; there results a style that is entirely individual. Graves never seems to be *writing* verses; it is all as direct, as *spoken*, as his tough, lank prose.

Mr Auden, too, knows how to be direct; but he elects more often to be oblique. His book opens with a 'charade', a poetic drama treating a family feud. It is a jerky, exceedingly bloody curtain-raiser, with considerable sudden shooting. It is the type of rustic thriller, reminiscent of nothing so much as of Jacinto Benavente's *La Malquerida*. What the symbolology may be, I do not know. There are excellent passages — lyrics, mostly, in a queer strain suggestive of early English verse, or of the austerity of certain choruses of Greek tragedy:

Though he believe it, no man is strong.
He thinks to be called the fortunate,
To bring home a wife, to live long.

But he is defeated; let the son
Sell the farm lest the mountain fall;
His mother and her mother won.

His fields are used up where the moles visit,
The contours worn flat; if there show
Passage for water he will miss it:

Give up his breath, his woman, his team;
No life to touch, though later there be
Big fruit, eagles above the stream.

But the 'charade' is so perverse in its melodrama, and so wilfully obscure (even for a charade!), that the ultimate effect is one of baffled irritation. And it is this same obscurity for obscurity's sake that endangers many of the thirty lyrics which follow. Sometimes Mr Auden succeeds in attaining the relaxed toughness, the casual angularity of improvisation; too often he fails to achieve anything but a prosaic iteration of incoherencies. The imagery is not precise, the emotion only partially released. It is curious to observe that this is nearly always the result not of slipshod composition, but of composition too sedulously disordered, — too refinedly chaotic. Mr Auden stems directly from Gerald Manley Hopkins; and his failures, like his successes, are those of the earlier poet. The manner at its best may be observed in the last sonnet:

Sir, no man's enemy, forgiving all
But will his negative inversion, be prodigal:
Send to us power and light, a sovereign touch
Curing the intolerable neural itch,
The exhaustion of weaning, the liar's quinsy,
And the distortions of ingrown virginity.
Prohibit sharply the rehearsed response
And gradually correct the coward's stance;
Cover in time with beams those in retreat
That, spotted, they turn though the reverse were great;
Publish each healer that in city lives
Or country houses at the end of drives;
Harrow the house of the dead; look shining at
New styles of architecture, a change of heart.[1]

Imprecision, though arising from a different cause, vitiates another first book of poems. Joseph Gordon Macleod's *The Ecliptic* is in many respects the most remarkable of all these books; certainly it is the most pretentious. It is a psychological life-history expressed in terms of zodiacal symbolism, each House standing for a phase of the subject's development. Superimposed is the apparatus of mythological allusion appropriate to each of the Signs (*Gemini*, for instance, is cast in the form of a dirge for 'Castor dead'). Obviously, the assigned symbols and accompanying apparatus are arbitrary: sometimes they coincide with the psychological phase under discussion (as is the case with *Capricornus*, for example), and sometimes they fit only after so much forcing and wrenching, both of subject and of symbol, that the reader is left far behind in a cloud of mystification. Nevertheless, the intention of the poem is clear, and Mr Macleod has been consistent to a fault. If, as he fears, 'interest in the poem will be confined unhappily to few readers', it will not be because he flagged in his purpose; rather, he fulfilled it too well, — so well, that whole Signs are as incomprehensible as the bloody periods of Mr Auden's 'charade'. But another fault threatens the poem: unlike Mr Graves and Mr Auden, Mr Macleod is more 'literary' than even his exceedingly literary symbolism warrants. Much of the poem is overwritten; one is reminded of Eumolpus' remark: '*Nam ut quisque versum pedibus instruxit sensumque teneriorem verborum ambitu intexuit, putavit se continuo in Heliconem venisse . . . Refugiendum est ab omni verborum* (*ut ita dicam*) *vilitate, et sumendae voces a plebe summotae, ut fiat* '*odi profanum vulgus et arceo*' . . . *Per ambages deorumque ministeria et fabulosum sententiarum tormentum praecipitandus est liber spiritus* . . .'[2] There are, however, powerful and even (in spite of the system) amusing passages: this from Capricornus, for example:

---

[1] It is true that Hopkins' passionate intensity once impelled him, in a sonnet, to address God as "Sir". It was a good effect, too; but, I believe, unfortunately unrepeatable.

> Tiddledywog. Meh, meh. The door bursts open wide
> The Sunday china stands up horrified.
> Tiddledywog. Meh, meh. All he has ever remembered
> Bulges out like a plaster panel badly distempered.
> Tiddledywog. Meh, membrum caprinum erexit:
> Culpabat alia aliam, quia ipsa conspexit.
> Tiddledywog. Tiddledywog. Tiddledywog.
> First he puts under the mat Persian cat and Pekinese dog.
> Then the tables' and chairbacks' torselling
> Smashes, and piles on potsherds of Worcester porcelain.
> Tiddledywog. Tiddledywog. Forefeet dangling like clappers
> Dancing about he grips the frightened flapper's
> Flaxen coils, throws to the ground and violates her. . . .

The same vigorous technic is a characteristic of Mr Campbell's verses in *Adamastor*. Roy Campbell will be remembered by many as the author of *The Flaming Terrapin*, an extraordinary combination of the heroic and the bombastic which appeared in 1924.[3] *Adamastor* is a collection of short pieces, most of them lyrics. There is little opportunity here for the *Terrapin* technic, it is true; but Mr Campbell has lost none of his impressive force. Neither, however, has he gained polish: his verses are strong, but formless; they sprawl. His is not the artistic unaffectedness of Robert Graves; it is a fundamental ingenuousness, which is extremely attractive, but which does much to dissipate the impact of his work. One is conscious of a terrific but quite undisciplined force: when it succeeds, it is the blind way of the elemental.

---

[2] Petronius: *Satyricôn CXVIII.*
[3] The Dial Press, New York.

II. KARTHAGE

Of the four Karthaginians, two are publishing first books: Miss Young and Mr Gregory. (Miss Deutsch's has long been a familiar name to readers of verse and reviewers of verse, and the jacket of *Epistle to Prometheus* defines her reputation as being 'outstanding . . . among American poets.') Both Miss Young and Mr Gregory have contributed more or less extensively to the little review of the *transition* order, and the former has won particular distinction by her sensitive, plangently beautiful stories.

'First poets' usually live in haunted houses. This is inevitable, and just: ultimate Style is not spontaneous, but is the product of a slow, more or less conscious imitation of and variation upon admired models. Individuality of style has been achieved when the poet has thoroughly assimilated his models, harmonized them with each other and impressed them with the cliché of his own sensibility: which has seldom been accomplished in a 'first' book. Nevertheless, both Miss Young and Mr Gregory are less influenced by their models than is the case with most of their contemporaries. Miss Young, especially, writes with an air that is distinctly fresh and personal. Ultimately, she stems from the Symbolists through Eliot:

> Here in this brittle city we contend
> With stone and star and voice,
> Knowing that there is no returning
> And that forever we shall wander
> And the edges of self recede
> Until the swift and errorless sleep begin. . . .

but even in her most obvious echoes a curious new touch is felt. It is a queer sideling delicacy of perception, a sensuousness that for all its authenticity is hesitant and strangely remote, that gives these verses, still eliotine in their inspiration, an air of poised suspension:

> The clatter of horses' hoofs came up to my window at Christmas,
> From a foreign street,
> I heard the children screaming,
> And turning a little I saw their fireworks
> Spatter blood on the sky.

Le temps est venu,
And a thousand machines plowed through my mind
Without recovering you.
The mornings began at six
With crisp cool sheets, and red cut roses,
It wasn't so windy at morning,
But the wind came out of noon
And rocked the palm trees:
Rain came in the afternoon at three,
And then the wind again.
The old man died who cried in his sleep:
Better off,
And the wheels whirred him beyond the hall.
Not dreaming we left the market.
I'll never be so happy again.

Miss Young is master of a muted falling cadence:

Islands there are so blue, Mother,
It is the coral that holds the changing colours,
Not the colour of mountain lakes, Mother.
We were not allowed to swim.
We have known the wind to change.
The Spring is a bitter different thing.

(Both of these passages are from poem IX, which does more within its short compass to establish the emotional associations of a colour (here, blue) than John Gould Fletcher accomplished in the whole range of his interminably tedious 'colour symphonies'.) Her diction is pure, and as direct as the simple declarative sentence with which she is apt to resolve a long descending cadence. Her failings are a mistiness, an occasional removal to the vague:

O the night flowers darkly and suddenly
Your thin hand trembling under the great green stone
Shakes off the last vestige of dream where a light might fall:
And thus s-l-o-w-l-y the beautiful inconsequence will begin.;

and, sometimes, a sentimental forcing of conceit into bathos:

She weeps softly, and the notes go on dropping,
I, saying *Ave Maria, Hail Mary, Blessed art thou.*
To the end.

But these faults are rare, and venial.

In her *Epistle to Prometheus*, on the other hand, Miss Babette Deutsch realizes most of the dangers of the eliotine school. Her poem is a pretentious Genealogy of fire, laden with anthropological, sociological, psychological, philosophical and therapeutical allusions, — a passionate indigestion. 'One catches glimpses', the dust-jacket warns us, 'of the Titan behind the mask of Socrates and that of Christ, behind that of Voltaire, of Lenin, and of Ghandi.' But catching less Titanic, though perhaps more significant, glimpses, the reader will probably detect, behind the mask of the poem, the slightly confused face of the poet who took the notes to *The Waste Land* seriously. The machine creaks under the learned weight of a thousand aptnesses. Even if it did not; even if the conception were as direct, the expression as chaste of bombast and Great Names as the least moving of Miss Young's poems, *Epistle to Prometheus* would be a failure for technical reasons alone. Miss Deutsch, who is frequently convincing and even powerful in a more or less strict form, is uneasy and often downright awkward in her use of cadenced verse. Her principle seems to be typographical: when a line looks long enough, break it off and begin another. Certainly, whole pages can be read aloud without the reader's even momentary consciousness of cadence or melody. At its best (aside from certain interludes of regular versification), *Epistle to Prometheus* sounds like a prose whose high blood-pressure limits it to a trudge, interrupted at times by a kind of rhapsodical hiccoughing:

> Beauty is dead and rotten.
> Goodness
> lies in a ditch.
> Truth is a painted whore.
> Can a lost generation —
> Machine-guns spitting death across barbed fields
> at men staled by their stinking trade,
> four years
> of spitting and being spat at by the guns —
> can a lost generation remember
> the world at morning?

After this pedestrian excursion, it is grateful to turn to Horace Gregory's *Chelsea Rooming House*. Like Miss Young, Mr Gregory derives from the Corbière-Laforgue-Eliot tradition; but there are other less well assimilated influences, which worry him. Chief among these, it seems to me, is Cummings. Mr Gregory has read the beautiful death-poems of *Tulips and Chimneys* and *Is 5* too well: the distinctive manner (a manner which only its originator can manage authoritatively, which in other hands however skillful seems artificial, non-organic) is disturbingly recognizable in such a verse as

round hips, neat breasts and oh
ever so sweetly miraculous smiles,

and because Mr Gregory's normal medium is always opposed to any such rhetoric, the result is an unfortunate jangle. Unlike Robert Graves, the poet has not yet managed to achieve a distinct style of his own by the eradication of every style-trick, though in his best work he seems to be striving for just such a style; unlike Miss Young, he lacks the detached intensity which can weld all manner of styles into poised and authentic new. He is still preoccupied with attitudes; in this, his verse is still immature, undergraduate: and yet it is this very quality which accounts for a great part of its unquestionable charm. Though the instrument is less fine, the range more strict, many of these verses release a young vigour which carries everything before it. In this respect they are like some of Phelps Putnam's poems in *Trinc:* it is easy to point out the deficiencies, but it is next to impossible to feel their importance.

Mr Gregory is most effective when he is expressing a sort of romantic nostalgia which is nevertheless absolutely unliterary: a frankly sentimental longing for hoyden good times and the short loves of the little streets and cafés, the 'one-night cheap hotels', the speakeasies, ferries, and amusement-parks. All of these things are adolescent and unreal and true. When the poet is content to let them speak for themselves (as they do, for instance, in *Hagen* and *Bridgewater Jones*), he is at his best; but his tendency towards attitudinizing frequently leads him to attempt more (which is effectively to achieve less): to moralize upon his symbols (*Hell-babies*), to 'interpret' (*McAlpin Garfinkel, Poet*), and, worst of all, to affect a sentimentality which obviously is not plausible. The last fault explains the embarrassing flatness of such poems as *Jesse James, the Preacher's Son:*

> Jesse James has gone to heaven . . .
> Jesse James, Jesse James,
> Jesse loved God,
> and God in his heaven
> loved Jesse James,

(which is as bad as Vachel Lindsay's best). It is possible that Mr Gregory has made for himself a romantic idol of Jesse James, or of Jack Dempsey. I will not question his sincerity. But it is notable that what is transmitted in these poems is not a real emotion, but a fake: something has gone wrong somewhere, and the result is a kind of perfunctory to-hell-with-you, — 'Jesse James was probably a swell guy and a hardboiled he-man, and I guess other swell guys etc. feel this way about him, and if they don't, by God! they *ought* to!' The Cult of the Clod, the legacy of Anderson and the Sententious Illiterates, observable at its devout best in the shabbiness for shabbiness' sake of the average Left-Wing magazine (to be a comrade-beyond-suspicion one must apparently write as gracelessly as possible), is as dangerous a force as any in contemporary art; it is certainly as pernicious as the Cult of the Beautiful (which is why Michael Gold's *New Republic* assault upon Thornton Wilder was so miraculously funny). Mr Gregory, in a good third of these poems, subscribes to it. Otherwise, he knows and loves the people he writes about, and is able to express them memorably in their own terms. His best poems are loose-knit, finely cadenced, curiously moving in their use of homely detail, as in this passage from *Longface Mahoney Discusses Heaven:*

> Then you'd think of heaven
> where there's peace, away from here
> and you'd go someplace unreal
> where everybody goes after something happens,
> set up in the air, safe, a room in a hotel.
> A brass bed, military hair brushes,
> a couple of coats, trousers, maybe a dress
> on a chair or draped on the floor.

and in *Time and Isidore Lefkowitz,* an experiment in the most dangerous bathos, which is nevertheless poignant and strangely sweet for its very artlessness:

. . . But it is not good to feel old,
time is too heavy,
it gets a man
tired, tired
when he thinks how time wears
him down
and girls, milk-fed, white,
vanish with glorious smiling millionaires
in silver limousines.

Mr. Gregory's music, at its best, is the unaffected, short-cadenced music of American speech. It is brief; it will not bear expansion. The longer poems lack the melodic cohesion of Miss Young's, just as they lack her deeper intensity; but within his limits, Mr. Gregory is a very real artist.

So much has been written of Archibald MacLeish, the only established poet of this group, that it is useless here to do more than comment briefly upon his latest book. *New Found Land*[4] is a collection of fourteen poems in various forms, mostly irregular lyrics. The exquisite technic (of living poets, only Pound and Eliot are finer craftsmen) which was already highly developed in *Streets of the Moon*, and which alone saved *The Hamlet of A. MacLeish* from apoplectic failure, has never been surer, never more persuasive. Indeed, so powerful is the incantation of MacLeish's music, so compelling is the force of his imagery, that the rapt listener is only too apt to accept without questioning poems whose analysis would often reveal fundamental weaknesses of conception and intention.

MacLeish's best poems are of a rich rhetoric charged completely with a positive emotion. His failures are houses of rhetoric haunted by inverted or misdirected emotion. In the former, he speaks definitely and for ever; in the latter he is sometimes irritating, sometimes tiresome, but almost never inept. *You, Andrew Marvel*, the first poem in the book,[5] is an illustration of the manner at its happiest. The inexorable approach of death, symbolized here not by the *Time's wingèd Chariot* of Marvel, but by the long westward lapse of night, marches steadily through deep-pulsed quatrains. The shadow creeps from East to West, chilling the warm fields, darkening ports, flooding the sea with night:

---

[4] The title is from Donne: *Going to Bed* (*Elegie* XIX).

[5] The poem has appeared before in at least oneanthology: Aiken's *American Poetry, 1671–1928* (The Modern Library).

> And deepen on Palmyra's street
> The wheel rut in the ruined stone
> And Lebanon fade out and Crete
> High through the clouds and overblown
>
> And over Sicily the air
> Still flashing with the landward gulls
> And loom and slowly disappear
> The sails above the shadowy hulls
>
> And Spain go under and the shore
> Of Africa the gilded sand
> And evening vanish and no more
> The low pale light across that land
>
> Nor now the long light on the sea
>
> And here face downward in the sun
> To feel how swift how secretly
> The shadow of the night comes on. . . .

In these lines MacLeish has caught the plangent throb, the tense expectancy, of Henry King's verses at the end of the *Exequy*:

> But heark! My Pulse like a soft Drum
> Beats my approach, tells *Thee* I come;
> And slow howere my marches be,
> I shal at last sit down by *Thee.*

It is to be noticed, too, that although here and otherwhere the poet makes use of far-off names and places ('And strange at Ecbatan', 'And now at Kermanshah', 'And Baghdad darken', 'And through Arabia'[6]), he uses them not 'romantically', as a lazier sensibility would do, trusting in their exotic associations to work the desired effect: in his hands they are organic material, as valid as his homeliest imagery. The strangeness which is the salient characteristic of this poem is got by a sensitive manipulation of the simplest detail: the deepening of the wheel-rut as the oblique rays shadow it, the gulls flashing in the sun above the already dark harbour, the trees taking the climbing night 'leaf by leaf'. *You, Andrew Marvel*, for its simplicity, its objectivity, and its wealth of suggestiveness, seems to me not only the best piece in *New Found Land*, but one of the most sensitive poems the author has yet written.

---

[6] *Cf.* the close of Browne's *Garden of Cyrus*, which must have been in the poet's mind: 'Though Somnus in Homer be sent to rouse up Agamemnon, I find no such effects in these drowsy approaches of sleep. To keep our eyes open longer, were but to act our Antipodes. The huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia. But who can be drowsy at that hour which freed us from everlasting sleep? or have slumbering thoughts at that time, when sleep itself must end, and as some conjecture all shall awake again?'

The same right use of easily-perilous material is found in the book's longest poem, '*American Letter*'. Positive, honest, unaffected, this is as sane an expression as any I know of the dilemma of the American artist, hurt by the crudeness, the raw unsympathy of his milieu, tormented by longing for the grace and aged sweetness of the European tradition, yet realizing that the expatriot's way is an evasion, a false solution, since

> This, this is our land, this is our people,
> This that is neither a land nor a race. We must reap
> The wind here in the grass for our soul's harvest:
> Here we must eat our salt or our bones starve.
> Here we must live or live only as shadows.
> This is our race, we that have none, that have had
> Neither the old walls nor the voices around us,
> This is our land, this is our ancient ground —
> The raw earth, the mixed bloods and the strangers,
> The different eyes, the wind, and the heart's change.
> These we will not leave though the old call us.
> This is our country earth, our blood, our kind.
> Here we will live our years till the earth blind us —

Technically, the poem is an excellent example of MacLeish's craftsmanship. The verses are irregularly cadenced pentametre couplets, but the strangest music is evoked by the subtle rhyming, or assonance: a feminine rhyme only half realized (*e.g.* 'strangers — change', 'shadows — had', and reversing the process, 'kind — blind us'). MacLeish has always been fond of hidden rhymes, intricately enchained assonances. Sometimes it is a repetition only of the vowel, or of the consonant; sometimes the rhyme is displaced, as in the couplets of *Anonymous Signature:*

I was a stranger in *all* the lands of the earth
I had no home in the lands where the light *falls*. . . .

You that *pity*
Labour done in pain at night and in *bit*terness

Think
        if you read these words in a *better* time
Of the shape of my mouth forming the difficult *letters*

Rhythmically the poems are no less complex. A mastery of the free cadence, a marshalling of disparate rhythms and measures into paragraphs so perfectly balanced that for all their license they seem as formally inevitable as the strictest conventional writing:

. . . It is colder now
                                there are many stars
                                                                we are drifting
North by the Great Bear
                                the leaves are falling
The water is stone in the scooped rocks
                                                                to southward
Red sun grey air
                        the crows are
Slow on their crooked wings
                                        the jays have left us
Long since we passed the flares of Orion
Each man believes in his heart he will die
Many have written last thoughts and last letters
None know if our deaths are told or forever
None know if this wandering earth will be found

It is interesting to compare the free verse of Miss Deutsch with writing such as this. And instructive. Miss Deutsch, like so many other *vers-libristes*, writes as though the free technic were really an escape from technic, as though the shaking off of the formal conventions of metre and rhyme were not actually the assumption of an even stricter discipline. Her method, like so much of the 'new art', like so much of the 'new education', seems to be based on the mistaken theory that substance and fervour are enough, that technic and finish are artificial, even 'stunting'. It is too often the case that a poem or a picture or a quartet is strange (or, as the credulous say, 'modernistic') simply because the creator has been unable or unwilling to subject himself to the grind of acquiring a fundamental technic. In a day when sincerity is so often mistaken for eccentricity, it is not surprising to find those who are willing to trade on the possibility of reversing the process. *New Found Land*, like Pound's *Cantos*, is fresh evidence that the only successful creator of something new is the man who has mastered, and can use, the traditional. Archibald MacLeish is not a 'revolutionary'. He is soundly in the tradition of English poetry, even when he is most experimental. It is for this reason that I have spent so much time on the technic of *New Found Land* that space forbids discussion of the book's faults. Generally, they are those of the *Hamlet* and *Streets of the Moon:* an emotion too personalized, an inverted sensibility (particularly obvious here in *Cinema of a Man*). But in this respect *New Found Land* is far less challengeable than any of the preceding books. In the best of the poems the emotion is externalized and completely realized. The universal is attained. At such times, the voice is perhaps the most distinguished speaking in America today.

DUDLEY FITTS

INDEX

Volume IV

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

(The symbol f. indicates a reproduction following a numbered page)

	No.	Page
Aiken, Conrad: Four Preludes (poems)	3	366
Architecture (chronicle), Elroy Webber	2	270
Architecture (chronicle), Lyman Paine	3	411
Architecture (chronicle), John Wheelwright	4	585
Art (chronicle), A. Hyatt Mayor	1	111
Art (chronicle), A. Hyatt Mayor	2	265
Aubade, 1925 (poem), Louis Zukofsky	2	229
The Automobile That Wouldn't Run (story), by Erskine Caldwell	1	75
Beginning Again With William Carlos Williams (postscript to Henry Adams), by Louis Zukofsky	2	261
Bessie, Alvah C.: Only We Are Barren (story)	2	203
Blackmur, Richard P.: Notes on E. E. Cummings' Language (essay)	2	163
Boyle, Kay: Episode in the Life of an Ancestor (story)	1	33
Bragin, Moe: Cow (story)	4	556
Caldwell, Erskine: The Automobile That Wouldn't Run (story)	1	75
Case of the New Republic (comment)	4	457
Chanler, Theodore: Music (chronicle)	1	106
Chanler, Theodore: Music (chronicle)	3	403
Charles Baudelaire (essay), by Charles du Bos	4	461
Chronicle: Louis Lozowick (theatre)	1	95
Chronicle: A. Hyatt Mayor (art)	1	111
Chronicle: Theodore Chanler (music)	1	106
Chronicle: A. Hyatt Mayor (art)	2	265
Chronicle: Elroy Webber (architecture)	2	270
Chronicle: Kenneth White (movie)	2	273
Chronicle: Theodore Chanler (music)	3	403
Chronicle: Sergei Eisenstein (movie)	3	406
Chronicle: Lyman Paine (architecture)	3	411
Chronicle: Lincoln Kirstein (dance)	4	573

Chronicle: Kenneth White (movie) 4 581
Chronicle: John Wheelwright (architecture) 4 585
Comment: The Case of the New Republic 4 457
Correspondence: (from) Lewis Galantière 2 277
Correspondence: (from) William Carlos Williams 2 277
Correspondence: (from) Raymond Hood 2 416
Correspondence: (from) Dudley Fitts 3 417
Correspondence: (from) Charles Moore 3 417
Correspondence: (from) Ezra Pound 4 571
Cow (story), by Moe Bragin 4 556
Cummings, E. E. (Two Poems) 4 569

Dance (chronicle), Lincoln Kirstein 4 573
DeJong, David C.: Seven Boys Sit at Night (poem) 2 260
du Bos, Charles: Charles Baudelaire (essay) 4 461

Eisenstein, Sergei: (chronicle), movie 3 406
Episode in the Life of an Ancestor (story), by Kay Boyle 1 33
Evans, Walker: New York City (four photographs) 1 f. 33
Evans, Walker: The New School for Social Research (photograph) 3 f. 410
Evans, Walker: The Red Cross Building (photograph) 3 f. 410

Fitts, Dudley: Correspondence (from) 3 417
Fitts, Dudley: Retreat (poem) 4 511
Four Preludes (poems), by Conrad Aiken 3 366
Four Photographs from the Russian Theatre 1 f. 98

Galantière, Lewis: Correspondence (from) 2 277
The Gates of the Compass (Part I, Memory) (poem), by Robert Hillyer 1 26
George Kelly and Dramatic Device (essay), by Kenneth White 3 384
Gordon, Caroline: The Ice House (story) 4 501

Henry Adams, Part III (criticism), by Louis Zukofsky 1 46
Hillyer, Robert: The Gates of the Compass (Part I, Memory) (poem) 1 26
Hood, Raymond: Correspondence (from) 3 316
Horgan, Paul: Song in Quiet Weather (poem) 1 82

The Ice House (story), by Caroline Gordon 4 501

Kemmerer, John: The Roundhouse (story) 3 372
Kirstein, Lincoln: (chronicle), Dance 4 573
Kroll, Leon (four photographs of drawings) 2 f. 264

Larsson, R. Ellsworth: The Various Tree (poem) 2 193
Leonardo and the Philosophers (essay), Paul Valéry 2 231
Lozowick, Louis: (chronicle), Theatre 1 95

MacLeod, Norman: Turquoise Chant (poem) 2 255
Mayor, A. Hyatt: (chronicle), Art 1 111
Mayor, A. Hyatt: (chronicle), Art 2 265
A Monument Among the Winds (poem), by Richard P. Blackmur 1 43
Moore, Charles: Correspondence (from) 3 417
Movie (chronicle), Kenneth White 2 273
Movie (chronicle), by Sergei Eisenstein 3 406
Movie (chronicle), by Kenneth White 4 581
Music (chronicle), Theodore Chanler 1 106
Music (chronicle), Theodore Chanler 3 403
Murnau, F. W.: two scenes from "The Last Laugh" (photographs) 4 f. 584
Murnau, F. W.: two scenes from "Tabu" (photographs) 4 f. 584
Murnau, F. W.: two scenes from "Sunrise" (photographs) 4 f. 584

The News Building (photograph) 2 272
Notes on E. E. Cummings' Language (essay), by Richard P. Blackmur 2 163

On a View of Pasadena from the Hills (poem), by Yvor Winters 4 498
Only We Are Barren (story), by Alvah C. Bessie 2 203

Paine, Lyman: (chronicle), Architecture 3 411
Pickman, Hester: Rainer Maria Rilke, Part I (essay) 3 325
Pickman, Hester: Rainer Maria Rilke, Part II (essay) 4 512
Pisanello, Part I (essay), by Adrian Stokes 1 5
Pound, Ezra: Correspondence (from) 4 571

Rainer Maria Rilke, Part I (essay), by Hester Pickman 3 325
Rainer Maria Rilke, Part II (essay), by Hester Pickman 4 512
Rainy Season (poem), by Kathleen Tankersley Young 1 74
Retreat (poem), by Dudley Fitts 4 511

Rilke, Rainer Maria (photographs) 3 f. 330
Rilke an der Eingangstür zum Château de Muzot (photograph) 3 f. 346
The Roundhouse (story), by John Kemmerer 3 372

The Sad End (story), by Kathleen Tankersley Young 2 256
Schroeder, Eric: The Winter Palace (poem) 3 382
Schwartz, Herbert: Some Problems of Musical Criticism (essay) 1 84
Seven Boys Sit at Night (poem), by David C. DeJong 2 260
Some Problems of Musical Criticism (essay), by Herbert Schwartz 1 84
Song in Quiet Weather (poem), by Paul Horgan 1 82
Stokes, Adrian: Pisanello (essay) 1 5

Theatre (chronicle), Louis Lozowick 1 95
Two Poems, by E. E. Cummings 4 569
Turquoise Chant (poem), by Norman MacLeod 2 255

Valéry, Paul: Leonardo and the Philosophers (essay) 2 231
The Various Tree (poem), by R. Ellsworth Larsson 2 193
Voyage in October (poem), by Kathleen Tankersley Young 1 73

Webber, Elroy: (chronicle), Architecture 2 270
Wheelwright, John: Wise Men on the Death of a Fool (poem) 3 401
Wheelwright, John: (chronicle), Architecture 4 585
White, Kenneth: (chronicle), Movie 2 273
White, Kenneth: (chronicle), Movie 4 581
White, Kenneth: George Kelly and Dramatic Device (essay) 3 384
Williams, William Carlos: Correspondence (from) 2 277
The Winter Palace (poem), by Eric Schroeder 3 382
Winters, Yvor: On a View of Pasadena from the Hills (poem) 4 498
Wise Men on the Death of a Fool (poem), by John Wheelwright 3 401

Young, Kathleen Tankersley: Rainy Season (poem) 1 74
Young, Kathleen Tankersley: Voyage in October (poem) 1 73
Young, Kathleen Tankersley: The Sad End (story) 2 256

Zukofsky, Louis: Henry Adams, Part III (criticism) 1 46
Zukofsky, Louis: Aubade, 1925 (poem) 2 229
Zukofsky, Louis: Beginning again with William Carlos Williams (postscript to Henry Adams) 2 261

BOOK REVIEWS

(The names of reviewers are in italics)

A Draft of XXX Cantos (Ezra Pound), by *Dudley Fitts* 2 278
A Monument to St. Augustine, by *Fr. Peter Daniel Hughes* 4 602
Adamastor (Roy Campbell), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613
Anabasis (St.-J. Perse), by *Lewis Galantière* 1 128
Ancient Painting (Mary Hamilton Swindler), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 3 447
Animals in Greek Sculpture (Gisela Richter), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 3 447
Ash Wednesday (T. S. Eliot), by *Allen Tate* 2 290
Axel's Castle (Edmund Wilson), by *Allen Tate* 4 607

The Birth of Western Painting (Robert Byron and David Talbot Rice), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 4 597
Blackmur, Richard P.: The Realm of Matter by George Santayana 2 298
Blackmur, Richard P.: The Letters of Henry Adams, ed. by Worthington Chauncey Ford 3 440

Charles Wm. Eliot (Henry James), by *John Wheelwright* 3 428
Chelsea Rooming House (Horace Gregory), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613
Cinque Cento Charles. Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim (Charles Moore), by *John Wheelwright* 1 138
Circumference (ed. by Genevieve Taggard), by *Dudley Fitts* 1 149
Colt, Stranger and the Desert Tree. Anabasis (St.-J. Perse), by *Lewis Galantière* 1 128
Cowper. The Stricken Deer (Lord David Cecil), by *Theodore Spencer* 3 450

The Ecliptic (Joseph Gordon Macleod), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613
El Greco (August L. Mayer), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 4 597
El Greco's Italian Period (Ellis Waterhouse), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 4 597
Epistle to Prometheus (Babette Deutsch), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613

The Failure of Henry Adams. Letters of Henry Adams (ed. by Worthington Chauncey Ford), by *Richard P. Blackmur* 3 440
Fitts, Dudley: Circumference, ed. by Genevieve Taggard 1 149
Fitts, Dudley: Olive, Cypress and Palm, ed. by Mina Curtiss 1 139
Fitts, Dudley: A Draft of XXX Cantos, by Ezra Pound 2 278

Fitts, Dudley: Adamastor, by Roy Campbell	4	613
Fitts, Dudley: Chelsea Rooming House, by Horace Gregory	4	613
Fitts, Dudley: The Ecliptic, by Joseph Gordon Macleod	4	613
Fitts, Dudley: Epistle to Prometheus, by Babette Deutsch	4	613
Fitts, Dudley: New Found Land, by Archibald MacLeish	4	613
Fitts, Dudley: Poems, by W. H. Auden	4	613
Fitts, Dudley: Poems, by Robert Graves	4	613
Fitts, Dudley: Ten Poems, by Kathleen Tankersley Young	4	613
Fitzgerald, Robert: The Gates of the Compass, by Robert Hillyer	2	313
Fitzgerald, Robert: The Proof, by Yvor Winters	2	313
Flowering Judas (Katherine Anne Porter), by *Yvor Winters*	2	301
Galantière, Lewis: Anabasis, by St.-J. Perse	1	128
The Gates of the Compass (Robert Hillyer), by *Robert Fitzgerald*	2	313
Genius. Savage Messiah (H. S. Ede), by *Lincoln Kirstein*	3	419
Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J. (G. F. Lahey), by *Hester Pickman*	1	118
Gilson on Augustine. Introduction à l'Étude de St. Augustine (Étienne Gilson), by *Richard McKeon*	1	143
The Good Boy Who Enjoyed the Cake. Charles Wm. Eliot (Henry James), by *John Wheelwright*	3	428
How to Commit a Murder (Danny Ahearn), by *Stewart Mitchell*	2	306
Hughes, Fr. Peter Daniel. A Monument to St. Augustine	4	602
I'll Take My Stand (by Twelve Southerners), by *Thomas Mabry*	3	436
Introduction à l'Étude de St. Augustine (Étienne Gilson), by *Richard McKeon*	1	143
Irony and Humility. Ash Wednesday (T. S. Eliot), by *Allen Tate*	2	290
Kirstein, Lincoln: Savage Messiah, by H. S. Ede	3	419
La Jeunesse du Peintre El Greco (J.-F. Willumsen), by *A. Hyatt Mayor*	4	597
The Letters of Henry Adams (ed. by Worthington Chauncey Ford), by *Richard P. Blackmur*	3	440

L'Influence du Symbolisme Français sur la Poésie Américaine (René Taupin), by *Yvor Winters* 4 607
Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim (Charles Moore), by *John Wheelwright* 1 138
Look Away, Look Away. I'll Take My Stand (by Twelve Southerners), by *Thomas Mabry* 3 436

Mabry, Thomas: I'll Take My Stand (by Twelve Southerners) 3 436
Major Fiction. Flowering Judas (Katherine Anne Porter), by *Yvor Winters* 2 301
Mayor, A. Hyatt: Ancient Painting, by Mary Hamilton Swindeler 3 447
Mayor, A. Hyatt: Animals in Greek Sculpture, by Gisela Richter 3 447
Mayor, A. Hyatt: Studies in Mediaeval Painting, by Bernhard Berenson 3 447
Mayor, A. Hyatt: La Jeunesse du Peintre El Greco, by J.-F. Willumsen 4 597
Mayor, A. Hyatt: El Greco, by August L. Mayer 4 597
Mayor, A. Hyatt: The Birth of Western Painting, by Robert and David Talbot Rice 4 597
Mayor, A. Hyatt: Men of Art, by Thomas Craven 4 597
Mayor, A. Hyatt: El Greco's Italian Period, by Ellis Waterhouse 4 597
McKeon, Richard. Introduction à l'Étude de St. Augustine, by Étienne Gilson 1 143
Men, Marriage and Me (Peggy Hopkins Joyce), by *Stewart Mitchell* 2 306
Men of Art (Thomas Craven), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 4 597
Mitchell, Stewart: How to Commit a Murder, by Danny Ahearn 2 306
Mitchell, Stewart: Men, Marriage and Me, by Peggy Hopkins Joyce 2 306
Mitchell, Stewart: My Thirty Years' War, by Margaret Anderson 2 306
Mitchell Stewart: The Strange Death of President Harding, by Gaston B. Means 2 306
Mitchell, Stewart: Vagabond Dreams Come True, by Rudy Vallée 2 306
Mortimer, Raymond: Portrait of a Diplomatist, by Harold Nicolson 1 155

Music Fit for the Odes. A Draft of XXX Cantos (Ezra Pound), by *Dudley Fitts* 2 278
My Thirty Years' War (Margaret Anderson), by *Stewart Mitchell* 2 306

New Found Land (Archibald MacLeish), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613

The Old Diplomacy. Portrait of a Diplomatist (Harold Nicolson), by *Raymond Mortimer* 1 155
Olive, Cypress and Palm (ed. by Mina Curtiss), by *Dudley Fitts* 1 149

Pickman, Hester: Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., by G. F. Lahey 1 118
Pickman, Hester: The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., ed. by Robert Bridges 1 118
Poems (W. H. Auden), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613
Poems (Robert Graves), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613
The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J. (ed. by Robert Bridges), by *Hester Pickman* 1 118
Port-Symbolism. Axel's Castle (Edmund Wilson), by *Allen Tate* 4 607
Portrait of a Diplomatist (Harold Nicolson), by *Raymond Mortimer* 1 155
The Proof (Yvor Winters), by *Robert Fitzgerald* 2 313
The Psyche of a Philosopher. The Realm of Matter (George Santayana), by *Richard P. Blackmur* 2 298

The Realm of Matter (George Santayana), by *Richard P. Blackmur* 2 298
Recent Opinions of El Greco. La Jeunesse du Peintre El Greco (J.-F. Willumsen), El Greco (August L. Mayer), The Birth of Western Painting (Robert Byron and David Talbot Rice), Men of Art (Thomas Craven), El Greco's Italian Period (Ellis Waterhouse), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 4 597
Recent Poetry. The Proof (Yvor Winters), The Gates of the Compass (Robert Hillyer), by *Robert Fitzgerald* 2 313

Savage Messiah (H. S. Ede), by *Lincoln Kirstein* 3 419
Spencer, Theodore: The Stricken Deer, by Lord David Cecil 3 450
The Strange Death of President Harding (Gaston B. Means), by *Stewart Mitchell* 2 306

The Stricken Deer (Lord David Cecil), by *Theodore Spencer* 3 450
Studies in Mediaeval Painting (Bernhard Berenson), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 3 447
Sweet Land of Liberty. My Thirty Years' War (Margaret Anderson), The Strange Death of President Harding (Gaston B. Means), How to Commit a Murder (Danny Ahearn), Men, Marriage and Me (Peggy Hopkins Joyce), Vagabond Dreams Come True (Rudy Vallée), by *Stewart Mitchell* 2 306
The Symbolist Influence. L'Influence du Symbolisme Français sur la Poésie Américaine (René Taupin), by *Yvor Winters* 4 607

Tate, Allen: Ash Wednesday, by T. S. Eliot 2 290
Tate, Allen: Axel's Castle, by Edmund Wilson 4 607
Ten Poems (Kathleen Tankersley Young), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613
Three Books on Art. Animals in Greek Sculpture (Gisela Richter), Ancient Painting (Mary Hamilton Swindeler), Studies in Mediaeval Painting (Bernhard Berenson), by *A. Hyatt Mayor* 3 447
"To Karthage Then I Came . . .," New Found Land (Archibald MacLeish), Poems (Robert Graves), Adamastor (Roy Campbell), Ten Poems (Kathleen Tankersley Young), The Ecliptic (Joseph Gordon Macleod), Poems (W. H. Auden), Chelsea Rooming House (Horace Gregory), Epistle to Prometheus (Babette Deutsch), by *Dudley Fitts* 4 613
Two Anthologies. Circumference (ed. by Genevieve Taggard), Olive, Cypress and Palm (ed. by Mina Curtiss), by *Dudley Fitts* 1 149

Vagabond Dreams Come True (Rudy Vallée), by *Stewart Mitchell* 2 306

Wheelwright, John: Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim, by Charles Moore 1 138
Wheelwright, John: Charles Wm. Eliot, by Henry James 3 428
Winters, Yvor: Flowering Judas, by Katherine Anne Porter 2 301
Winters, Yvor: L'Influence du Symbolisme Français sur la Poésie Américaine, by René Taupin 4 607

The HOLLIDAY BOOKSHOP

49 East 49
NEW YORK CITY
Telephone: PLaza 3-0161

* * *

Current English Books · Modern First Editions

JOYCE · ELIOT · HEMINGWAY · LAWRENCE
HUXLEY · MRS. WOOLF

Descriptive lists of distinguished new books
issued monthly

Dunster House Bookshop
INCORPORATED

First Editions

Rare Books

Press Books

Cambridge
20 South Street
at Dunster Street

IMPORTED
RECORDS

New 1931 Edition

ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF THE WORLD'S BEST
RECORDED MUSIC

372 Pages of solid information about all important records issued by every record manufacturer in the world, not listed in any American record catalogue.

Price 25 cents postpaid

The Gramophone Shop, Inc.
18 East 48th Street, New York City

THE CRITERION

Edited by T. S. ELIOT

IN the seven years of its existence as a review of literature THE CRITERION has published work by the most distinguished authors of every country and every generation. Among the contributors are found such names as George Saintsbury, Charles Whibley, J. M. Robertson, G. K. Chesterton, W. B. Yeats, Virginia Woolf, Clive Bell, E. M. Forster, Aldous Huxley, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, James Joyce, May Sinclair. It was the first review in England to publish Marcel Proust, Paul Valery, Jacques Maritain, Charles Maurras, Max Scheler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Jean Cocteau, and other foreign writers. The files of THE CRITERION constitute the most nearly complete record in existence of the intellectual life of Europe during these seven years. THE CRITERION is necessary to anyone who wishes to follow that intellectual and artistic life in the present and future.

Subscription 30s. per annum. The publishers will gladly submit a specimen copy to interest readers of THE HOUND AND HORN. Such applications should be accompanied by stamps to the value of sixpence to cover postage and should be addressed to The Circulation Manager, 24, Russell Square, London, W. C. 1.

International
BOOK and ART SHOP
16 East 8th Street
New York, N. Y.

Etchings — *pencil-signed:*

ROSENBERG AUSTIN BRANGWYN
LEGROS STRANG
CHAGAL LABOUREUR VLAMINCK ETC.

Etchings — *plate-signed:*

WHISTLER CAMERON LEGROS
HADEN ETC. ETC.

Original Lithographs

BY CLASSIC AND MODERN MASTERS

Woodcuts — **BY ZORACH FRIESZ**

MODERN FRENCH AND GERMAN MASTERS

Books — **ALL KINDS**

Special Sale in
JUNE and JULY

GUY
STONESTREET

35 West 44th Street
New York City

Announces Special Sale of

RARE SPORTING BOOKS
FIRST EDITIONS
NEW IMPORTATIONS
FINE STANDARD SETS

For months of
JUNE *and* OCTOBER

WANTED

All available copies of

THE
HOUND &
HORN

Volume I, No. 1
and
Volume III, No. 2

THE
HOUND & HORN
announces that
VOLUMES THREE AND FOUR
IN BOUND FORM
are now available; bound in decorative paper boards and red buckram back with an attractive label.

(*Complete Index*)

Price $4.50

$2.00 *credit allowed for return of complete sets*

545 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY

ARTWORK

EDITED BY PROFESSOR RANDOLPH SCHWABE

Slade Professor of Fine Art in the University of London

THE SUMMER NUMBER of *Artwork* contains The Case of Mancini by Rene MacColl, Some Forgotten Wood-Engravers by Roy Morris, Despiau by Therese Lavauden, The Pottery and Tiles of Bernard Leach by John Gould Fletcher, James Ensor by Frederick Carter, Eugene Delacroix in the Chambre des Deputes by Richard Cantinelli, On Desert Islands by D. S. MacColl, and The Cinema by John Grierson.

Post 75 CENTS Free

Annual Subscription 3 dollars from the Publishers
at 11 Bedford Street, London, W.C. 2, England

THE

ADELPHI

MONTHLY

Contents for June 1931 will include:

PROPHETS WANTED
an anti-Humanist essay by BERTRAM BROOKER

SHAKESPEARE'S DEDICATION
an essay on Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton by J. MIDDLETON MURRY

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON
an appreciation by JOHN COWPER POWYS

THE MAID
a short story by L. A. PAVEY

THE GENIUS OF RUSSIA
a review of Prince Mirsky's *Russia* by JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

* * *

Some recent contributors

GEORGE SANTAYANA
HERBERT READ
LÉON SHESTOV
ALDOUS HUXLEY
S. FOSTER DAMON
ROBERT HILLYER

STELLA BENSON
WALDO FRANK
DOROTHY RICHARDSON
EDMUND BLUNDEN
STUART GILBERT
E. B. WHITE

Annual Subscription: $3.50 per annum, post free

58 BLOOMSBURY STREET
LONDON, W.C.1

Recent CAMBRIDGE *Books*

THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES

Sir James Jeans

"The best introduction to astronomy we have ever seen." — *The Outlook.* $2.50

PLANT LIFE THROUGH THE AGES

A. C. Seward

With 140 beautiful illustrations. $10.00

EIGHT VICTORIAN POETS

F. L. Lucas

"Fine balance of judgment." — *The N. Y. Times.*
"Brilliant simplicity." — *The New Statesman.* $1.80

THE EIGHTEEN-EIGHTIES

Edited by Walter de la Mare

Essays by G. K. Chesterton, T. S. Eliot,
John Drinkwater, etc. $4.50

These four books were selected by
HOUND AND HORN
as likely to be of most interest to its readers.

Orders may be sent to this office by using the coupon on the right.

HOUND AND HORN
545 Fifth Avenue, New York
Please send me:

...... cop.... of *The Stars in Their Courses*
...... cop.... of *Plant Life Through the Ages*
...... cop.... of *Eight Victorian Poets*
...... cop.... of *The Eighteen-Eighties*

PUBLICATIONS OF
The Cambridge University Press
are distributed in America by
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Oxford Books on Art

★ ★ ★

PATTERN

A STUDY OF ORNAMENT IN WESTERN EUROPE

FROM 1180 TO 1900

By JOAN EVANS

A magnificent work in two volumes with 435 illustrations. Prospectus free on request. $50.00

ANIMALS IN GREEK SCULPTURE

BY GISELA M. A. RICHTER

No work of adequate proportions has hitherto been devoted to animal sculpture, and the wealth of plates makes the book both authoritative and a source of enduring delight. $10.00

AJANTA

BY G. YAZDANI

With an Introduction by *Laurence Binyon.*

This new reproduction in color and monochrome, based on photography, of the famous frescoes, has been undertaken at the command of H. E. H. the Nizam of Hyderabad. The most complete and authoritative collection yet made. Part I. $65.00

The SHĀH-NĀMAH of FIRDAUSĪ

THE BOOK OF THE PERSIAN KINGS

BY J. V. S. WILKINSON and LAURENCE BINYON

With 24 illustrations from a Fifteenth Century Manuscript in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society. Several of the illustrations from the finest Ms. of the great epic are in 4 colors and gold. $16.00

ENGLISH ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE

BEFORE THE CONQUEST

BY A. W. CLAPHAM

The first comprehensive survey of Saxon architecture. 65 plates and 52 text figures. $10.50

These Books May Be Ordered from **HOUND & HORN**

RUMFORD PRESS
CONCORD, N. H.

EWIN & EWIN INC.

Fine Old English
Furniture

Objects of Art

Interior Decorations

667 Madison Avenue
NEW YORK

2

APR 1 1 1932